T. S. ELIOT

Wyndham Lewis

29 April 1957

OF MY FIRST MEETING with Wyndham Lewis, which took place in Ezra Pound's rooms early in 1915, Lewis himself wrote so amusingly, and with so precise a painter's memory for visual detail, in his contribution to a volume published in my honour in 1948, that I can have nothing further to say. Pound had previously shown me some of Lewis's drawings — I possessed myself of a copy of the *Timon* portfolio, which mysteriously vanished from my library some years ago; I had also seen the first number of *Blast*; and Pound had, I think, mentioned a remarkable novel called *Tarr* which was to be serialised in *The Egoist*. I was then doing some post-graduate work at Oxford, and my early meetings with Pound and Lewis took place during the Christmas vacation. I dined one evening with Lewis at a restaurant in Charlotte Street which I still frequent, and visited him in his rooms in Fitzroy Street on some occasion on which he was at home to the artists with whom he was then associated: I remember Bomberg, Etchells, Roberts, Wadsworth, Miss Sanders and Miss Dismorr as being present.

Later in that same year Lewis appeared in the khaki brassard, decorated with the royal crown in red, which was the badge of those who had volunteered and were in due course to be called up. During the rest of the 1914-18 War I saw him but rarely, even during the period when he, with a number of other artists, had been withdrawn from the Front (Lewis, of course, was an artilleryman, and ended the war as a subaltern) to render their impressions of the battlefield on canvas. It was not until 1921 that I began to see much of him, beginning with an expedition which Lewis himself has mentioned, but of which I have some supplementary memories worth recording.

In the summer of that year, 1921, Lewis and I made an excursion down the Loire to Nantes and the Morbihan, ending with a few days in Paris. Whether we were away for two or for three weeks I cannot remember: it was my summer holiday when I was working

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in Lloyds Bank in the City. It was on this visit that we both first made the acquaintance of James Joyce. Our first meeting with Joyce on this visit has been described by Lewis, in a book of reminiscences, not only with great humour and verbal felicity, but with an accuracy to which I can bear witness. I had almost forgotten that episode, until my memory was revived by Lewis's account, but my memory thus aroused confirmed every detail of his story of that first meeting, at which we presented a parcel of unknown contents confided to us for delivery to Joyce by Pound.

My memory is a feeble one, whether for scenes or for conversations, and I envy Lewis's ability to conjure up pictures from the past. While we were on the Loire I provided myself with a sketch book; and under Lewis's critical eye, and guided by his tuition, made a number of sketches, which, feeble as they were, served to fix some of the landscape and domestic architecture in my mind. But one scene, which I had no opportunity of sketching, remains very clear in my mind. At Saumur Lewis and I hired bicycles for the day, with the intention of riding over to Chinon. It was Lewis's bicycle that caused all the trouble. We had hardly got out of the town when the chain came off; efforts to get it back in place proved fruitless, and I think we returned to the bicycle shop for repairs. On our second start we got further on the way, indeed, rather too far; for we were speeding along at a great pace, well beyond the town, when suddenly Lewis's handlebars snapped off, and he was precipitated violently on to the road. He was rather badly shaken, one trouser was torn and his knee badly bruised. There was an inn not far off; I managed to lead Lewis to a bench outside the door; and after some difficulty persuaded a rather unsympathetic hostess to provide brandy. Leaving Lewis on the bench, with his battered cycle beside him, I hastened back to Saumur and chartered an open barouche, which I led to the scene of the accident. The driver and I got Lewis into the barouche, hoisted his cycle behind, and returned to Saumur. As might be expected, a violent altercation with the bicycle-shop proprietor ensued: Lewis very angry at having been given so unreliable a machine, and the owner insistant that Lewis should pay for the damage to the bicycle. The dispute was terminated, in a hostile atmosphere, without any money changing hands.

The incident in itself is, up to this point, purely comic. But a good deal of dirt from the road had got into the wound on Lewis's

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knee, and he was firmly persuaded that there might have been some contamination which would lead to lockjaw. So much did this thought prey upon his mind, that he saw a doctor in Paris as well as a local practitioner in Saumur; and I do not think that his fears were appeased until the lapse of time, with no symptoms appearing, proved them to have been vain. This fear of tetanus, which surprised me, was, I came to think, indicative of Lewis's temperament. Many people may have thought of Lewis as "tough" and aggressive, with a tendency to persecution mania. He was rather, it now seems to me, a highly strung, nervous man, who was conscious of his own abilities, and sensitive to slight or neglect. To what extent, I still wonder, was the aggressiveness self-protective? His work was persistently ignored or depreciated, throughout his life, by persons of influence in the world of art and letters who did not find him congenial. Those who dislike such a man call him "neurotic"; but I do not think he was any more neurotic than other men of genius. He was independent, outspoken, and difficult. Temperament and circumstances combined to make him a great satirist: satire can be the defence of the sensitive.

I remember Lewis, at the time when I first knew him, and for some years thereafter, as incomparably witty and amusing in company, with the same gift of phrase in conversation as is found in his writings. Later, I saw less of him; and on his return from Canada and America he was already a sick man, with the danger of blindness imminent. After the blindness had put an end to painting, and he was obliged to confine himself to writing, his conversation lost its brilliance, but his temper, I thought, was somewhat mellowed. (His essay describing the approach of blindness, printed in *The Listener* of May 10th, 1951, is a terrifying masterpiece of calm and detached self-observation.) Yet at no time do I remember his wit as having any savour of malice. His criticism was impartial. He had been a frank and merciless critic even of his friends, to whom indeed he devoted more attention than to his foes — witness his comments, in *Time and Western Man*, on Joyce and Pound, and elsewhere on myself.

It may be that the very variety of Lewis's achievement, and the fact that so much of it just falls short of perfection, obscure his excellence in each kind. But the point I should like to make is that some of his best work in writing was done after blindness had overtaken him, when the difficulties of composition might

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have been, for another man, insuperable. I think of *Rotting Hill*, *The Writer and the Absolute;* but chiefly of *Self Condemned* and *Monstre Gai*. His last published book, *The Red Priest*, is I think inferior: not, however, because of failing powers, but because of a mistaken choice of subject-matter (his Anglo-Catholic priest is quite preposterous). And in the best of the late work, *Self Condemned* and *Monstre Gai*, there is a seriousness absent from *Tarr*. *Tarr* is a not altogether satisfactory composite of satire and tragedy; in *The Revenge for Love* the tragedy and pathos begin to dominate and give greater significance to the satire; in *Self Condemned* Lewis wrote a novel of almost unbearable poignancy.

There is enough of Lewis's best work as painter, as draughtsman and as novelist to content us: what we shall miss the most, I think, is Lewis the Gadfly and inspired pamphleteer. We have no critic of the contemporary world at once so fearless, so honest, so intelligent, and possessed of so brilliant a prose style.

I dined with Lewis and his wife in December: he was obviously a very sick man. I never saw him again. Early in January I went abroad with my wife. On our return I was very busy, and then succumbed to bronchitis. While I was confined to bed I had a message from Ashley Dukes to say that Lewis had been taken to hospital and was unconscious; and a few days later another message to say that Wyndham Lewis was dead.

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JOHN HOLLOWAY

Wyndham Lewis:

The Massacre and the Innocents

[*This article was already in the press at the time of the unfortunate death of Wyndham Lewis on March 8th of this year. One or two points of detail have been changed.*]

I

"MODERN LITERATURE," as that expression is still often understood in Britain, may be a very fine thing, but about most it there is a radical disadvantage: it does not belong to ourselves, it belongs to our fathers. The most remarkable work of Yeats, Lawrence, Joyce, Pound and (the *Quartets* aside) T. S. Eliot all appeared within the space of little more than a decade, and we are still, in a literary sense, reeling from it. Our whole critical method and discipline is under its deep influence, for one thing: for another, most people still think that it is these writers who are *modern literature*. Yet this, in 1957, is out of the question. If no one else can claim modernity instead, there is no such thing.

Critics have recently, and rightly, been stressing how rich and contemporary a grasp D. H. Lawrence had upon the England that he knew; but to read the much-praised Chapter XII of his last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1930), is to see that the answer to his satirical "England, my England! But which is *my* England?", is that it is an England of the past. Its rhubarb and lemon in the greengrocers', its new big Primitive chapel, its criss-cross of gentlemen's parks and railway sidings, horse carts and lorries, new semi-detached villas and occupants of them who poach the rabbits, may still exist (so do the Roman earthworks): but they belong to history. In fact, behind the total contrast in *attitude*, and behind some real differences of detail, there is a deep similarity between the Midland world of Lawrence and that landscape of factories,

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mineowners' residences, and artisans' dwellings which was enthused over by Disraeli. Here Joyce and Lawrence know similar worlds. In both there is a muddle in the drabness, the squalor is in decay, it is socially recessive, the author's world retains a certain shabby patina. It can accommodate, for example, the Christmas tree scene at the beginning of *Aaron's Rod*.

What distinguishes the mid-twentieth century is something with less patina and far less accommodatingness.

I am far from claiming that Wyndham Lewis does everything for 1957 that Lawrence could do, say, for 1927: but his is a case which makes one wish to apply to the *writer* something which Arnold said of the *critic*.

> Judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business, and so in some sense it is; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, *along with fresh knowledge*, is the valuable one; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself. And it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it — but insensibly, and in the second place, not the first . . . that the critic will generally do most good to his readers.

The basic value that novelist offers reader is fresh knowledge in the sense of massive or violent insight into a reality which is normally the reality of his time. Moral discriminations will no doubt be integral to this, but they will also be consequential, and often be subordinate.

Joyce, Lewis, Lawrence and Eliot (and, I would add, Edwin Muir) were almost exact contemporaries; but, of the four, two died in middle age, and Lewis's work was crowned by decisive achievement, and settled into a crystallizing comprehensiveness, only late in his life. This is why it makes sense to see him as writing of our own world, of the world a generation later than (save for Muir) the others. Even from the start he was the most clearly a man of this century, the most clearly unthinkable in any previous one. Why? Because for him alone was the 1914-1918 war, best symbol and also plain start for our time, proved a decisively fructifying experience. "With me," Lewis writes awkwardly but validly, in his autobiography *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937), "war and art have been mixed up from the start. It is still." At the very beginning of that book, he speaks of the war as of people crossing a bridge.

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> The bridge is red, the people are red, the sky is red . . . upon one side of this bridge is quite a different landscape to what meets the eye upon the other side, as if the stream crossed by the bridge separated a tropic from a polar landscape.

A significant image: the red, and the polar landscapes recur in Lewis's mid-century cosmos. *Blasting and Bombardiering*, with the grim humour of its inhuman bombardments, and its lumbering chaos of mud, is incidentally one of the finest of British war books. Its author's response to the war, and the intensity of that response, show also in his painting: the devastated landscapes with their stern aimless gunners, the frozen frenzied violence of *Battery Position in a Wood* or *A Battery Shelled*, for example; or *War Scene No. 1*, with its forbidding city towers, another significant symbol, in the distance; or *The No. 2*, an ambitious water-colour dominated by a great arc of flaring yellow and the stooping demon-like figure of the gunner. Recently, these works were shown in a general exhibition of Lewis's art. Their seminal significance for his later painting, and his books, was inescapable.

Several of them appeared, with other works, in his first one-man show: *Guns*, 1919. The little-known catalogue to that exhibition deserves attention. Its twin points of reference are Van Gogh's terrifying picture of the prison yard—which Lewis saw as basically adequate to the experience of war—and Uccello's famous perspective battle-piece. But the latter "does not borrow from the *fact* of war any emotion, any disturbing or dislocating violence, terror or compassion—any of the psychology that is proper to the events of war." Lewis did. "It is certain that the philosophy of the war, all the serious interpretation of it, has yet to be done." One thing above all that he got from the war years shows up in *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926): "I found myself in the blood bath of the Great War, and in that situation *reflected on the vanity of violence . . that side of Sorel seems to me too literary*" (my italics). With that quiet, final judgment upon the extremism of the man of books, the key word comes out. *Violence*. The three dimensions within which Lewis has constructed his vision of contemporary life could be given, perhaps, three titles: *violence*, the *machine*, the *megapolis*.

II

These three things are the bases of Lewis's order; but how does

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he see them? Violence comes in Lawrence, sometimes with a powerful and occasionally even with a disquieting charge of sexuality; it is not, though, among his decisive insights. When it comes in Hemingway, it is with heroic overtones that the author does not so much diagnose in the contemporary fabric, as desiderate. No one thinks that the violence in Lewis's pages, often sickeningly emphatic and detailed, has anything heroic about it; but the relation he sees between violence and sex is worth scrutiny. There is a beating-up, for example, in *The Revenge for Love* (Lewis's novel of leftism and the Spanish War in the 1930s) which would hit a biassed critic as clearly sexual: Jolly Jack Cruze, the fascistic blond dapper satyr, turns up on the scene just as the Stalinist Percy Hardcaster and Jill the upper-class join-the-masses Communist (jolly Jack has his eye on her) have had a squabble. Jack capitalizes the occasion with vicious thoroughness. At first, the sex link is clear: "Old Jack's fighting glands were all in good order, thank you . . . chance had delivered his worst sex-foe into his clutches. The interest of all his glands was engaged in this transaction." And when the first blow falls, " 'Well done!' called out Gillian . . . 'He's got what was coming to him.' " But as Jack's brutality swiftly mounts, the experience somersaults. Violence *expels* sex. The scene is one of fright, disgust, embarrassment and routine hospital squalor. " 'Here, fetch a taxi—don't stand there picking your teeth' ", is Jill's (and Jack's) response to the scene: its end is a trolley disappearing into an operating theatre.

Take with it the scene in Lewis's first important work, *Tarr* (1917): Kreisler rapes Bertha Lunken, and Lewis unobtrusively but clearly indicates that (as the plot requires) the rape is complete. Once again, there is the sudden eruption of the kind of violence we so unjustly call "brutal"; but once again, violence makes short work of sex. To the reader it is as if a surgical operation were being forcibly performed—with a mechanical insistence related to the relative powers of muscular contraction and the physiological functions of the protagonists. To say that nothing could be less erotic is an under-statement: few things could be more anti-erotic. A drawing of 1912 satirically entitled *Courtship* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London) snaps up the same point: brutal suddenness, greed, machine-like energy. A detached contemplation, focussed upon suddenness and ferocity quite at the expense of eroticism, is clear also in the account of the woman

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thrown to demons in *Malign Fiesta* (1955); but I am coming back to this.

Lewis is interested in violence for its suddenness, unpredictability, thoroughness and squalor: the meaningless twist of events in "The Bishop's Fool" (a short story in *Rotting Hill*, 1951) that in a few seconds has a country parson scuffling on the ground and ignominiously kicked in the genitals; the lethal fight in *The Red Priest* (1956). Clearest of all is the fight in the Canadian hotel lounge which is fulcrum in *Self Condemned* (1951) and which breaks up the "private world of joy" that two wartime English expatriates had been creating for themselves.

> "We have had our baptism of fire, have we not, in the violent life of this hotel? It is an astonishingly violent place, but *no more violent than the world* of which it is so perfect a microcosm."

That italicized phrase locates the target: violence is no meaningless device for enlivening a story, but a permanent, imminent and deeply significant hazard of life. There is no element of relish. Even a phrase like "horrified fascination" would be misleading. What violence evokes in Lewis is the horror it justifies in the timid man (the urbanized intellectual whose very existence it unremittingly threatens); and at the same time the cold, intent, and comprehensive regard of the courageous man. For those who can sense the controlled fury with which Lewis writes of Kreisler or Cruze, or the compassionate but decisive judgment passed on the Red Priest by the novel of that name taken in its entirety, this cannot be in doubt.

The reaction seems to me to be validly and valuably of our time: most of us being in fact urbanized intellectuals who live nevertheless in (to use Plato's phrase) a city where any thing can happen to any man. Once or twice, Lewis seems to me to pay a price for this contemporaneity: the price of turning his record from literature into journalism, of seeing his material as a mere discrete fact about a certain few years, rather than as one focussable form of enduring human reality. This is true of the juvenile gang warfare at the beginning of *The Red Priest;* but it is exceptional. Normally violence undergoes a deep integration into his total awareness of life. One way of seeing that for Lewis it is usually more than a mere post-war freak is to notice the potentiality, the atmosphere of violence—the brutality, massiveness,

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intense emotion, callousness—throughout those fine early stories, *The Wild Body*. These appeared in 1927, but seem to derive from Lewis's experiences abroad during the 1900s. They are set in traditional rural France and Spain; they show *homo ferox* in a world whose survival into the twentieth century is a mere accident. "A world of sodden mammoths," Lewis called it at one point. The same awareness, deep and general, shows in Lewis's pre-war art: *Figure Composition* (1912-1914), for example, with its burly nudes in their greedy dance, or *Man and Woman* or *Kermesse*, with their stocky aggressive dwarfs. The experience of the war was a focus rather than a true genesis for him.

III

Lewis sees violence as a result of the mechanical in life. Kreisler not only rapes Bertha; he pursues the prim little Russian refugee Soltyk from café to café, slapping his face as publicly as he can each time, in order to provoke a duel; he conducts the duel (or rather caricature of a duel) with the obsessed rancour of a malignant puppet; finally he departs upon a motiveless and suicidal fugue, drawn as if by gravitation to the homeland that has repudiated him. Lewis's comment much later (*Rude Assignment*, the second autobiography, 1950) was, "Kreisler is a *machine*, aloof and violent." So, too, the boxing-champion draft-dodger who beats up René in *Self Condemned:* "a crouched, medium-sized figure was dancing in front of him. There was no angry face—there was hardly any face at all. *It was an engine rather than a man.*" Man is *homo ferox* because he is *l'homme machine*, and (if one may somersault one's metaphors) the hand of the machine may be traced in all he does.

Does this sense of the mechanical in life go back to what is as boring as any other extreme, some kind of old-fashioned materialism? Not as Lewis employs it: the analogy is too freehand and flexible to invoke that desiccating affinity. The link (and this is a mark of his modernity) is rather with a mathematician like Norbert Wiener, who traces servo-mechanisms in the human body, but as counterpart to this, analyses mechanical processes by mathematics that make them seem half human. Two widely separated quotations, taken as pointers merely, may clinch the matter. One is from *The Caliph's Design*, an important early pamphlet on art and especially architecture which calls upon artists to seek a

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genuine mastery of "the machine as a new mode of being". The relevant passage runs:

> Life, simply, however vivid and tangible, is far too material to be anything but a mechanism, and the seagull is not far removed from the hydroplane . . . every living form is a *miraculous mechanism*. [My italics.]

The other passage is from *The Art of Being Ruled:* it must be read in the light of this remark about the seagull:

> Men are tigers, wasps and wolves, or parrots, sheep, geese and asses, or the humdrum monkey, rather than men.

The mechanical may be the modern, but it is also the animal; and it is also the primitive. This is where Lewis's opposition in *Paleface* to Lawrence's primitivism has its place. To take the Indian as ideal is not simply to prefer intuition to intelligence; it is to find a deceptively self-concealing outlet for a distinctive and widespread modern weakness. Lawrence's devotion to the peons is " . . . really an expression of the worst side of the Machine Age . . . Machine Age Man is effusive about them *because they are machines* like himself; and Mr L, at least, makes no pretence of admiring his savages because they are free . . . I would rather have the least man that *thinks*, than the average man that squats and drums and drums, with 'sightless, soulless' eyes." This distorts Lawrence, but for the moment that is not the issue: which is the range of reference that Lewis gives the mechanical. The breadth of that range shows again when, later in the book, he says that primitive and non-European art was dominated by mechanism, but then moves straight on to the rest of nature: "the insect and plant worlds, much more than the animal world, have always carried their structure outside . . . and thrust it upon the eye. The insect world could be truly said to be a Machine world." Finally, perhaps the fullest statement of all: an essay entitled "Inferior Religions", an explanatory appendix to the short stories in *The Wild Body:*

> The fascinating imbecility of the creaking men machines that some little restaurant or fishing boat works, was the original subject of these stories . . . The boat's tackle and dirty shell, or the hotel and its technique of hospitality, keeping the limbs of the men and women involved in a monotonous rhythm from morning till night . . . in case of a hotel or fishing boat, for instance, the complexity of the

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> rhythmic scheme is so great that it passes as open and untrammelled life. *This subtle and wider mechanism merges, for the spectator, in the general variety of nature. Yet we have in most lives the spectacle of a pattern as circumscribed and complete as a theorem in Euclid.* [My italics.]

It is in this book too that Lewis writes of laughter as distinctively the human acting as machine. All in all, Lewis makes the central contemporary invention enlighten the whole range of life.

IV

This rich insight has, admittedly, its trivial manifestations: loathesome Melanie wooing loathesome Dannie in *The Apes of God*, "the burglar of his electricity meantime got shocks from the handle of the machine". It shows most significantly at the other extreme, though; when it does this, it can govern the path of a book from its beginning through to its end. But first, Lewis's apprehension of Megapolis. Here the reader encounters his modernity and contemporaneity in its starkest form.

What Lewis said about Kreisler bridged violence and mechanism. One of his more ambitious paintings, *The Surrender of Barcelona* (1936), now in the Tate Gallery in London, bridges both of these and Megapolis. What it shows is the ritual moment of entry into the surrendered town. There is no violence, save by implication: the shrivelled figure dangling from the gibbet bang in the centre of the canvas. But the burly, armoured warriors are automata, robots: when their visors are up, they have either no face at all, or a mere machine-like disc. Yet on the whole, humanity (or inhumanity) is subordinate to architecture; and this (save for one building in the extreme corner, which is faintly reminiscent of the Baptistery at Pisa) belongs to no medieval city. Its vast flat windowless walls, round towers, simple inhuman masses, smoke stacks (as they seem) and grim gaping casemates cannot be in anything but reinforced concrete. It is a Barcelona of the Maginot, the Siegfried line; insofar as it is a city, it is the megapolis of twentieth century war.

Megapolis shows early in Lewis's art (*New York*, 1914, for example; or his largest oil painting, *Revolution*, c.1915 — this was probably known also as *The Crowd*). Moreover, his fiction has always been essentially urban. But his later works deal not with urbanity, but monstrosity. "This bush metropolis had the ap pearance of an English midland city, which had gone in for sky-

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scrapers" (Momaco in Canada, *Self Condemned*). We know it only in its hotel corridors, in the noises that come through the wall, the hostile anonymity of the "Beverage Room", the trivial vice of aimless nomads, the rooms and streets lit by artificial light (the exclusion of daylight in this part of the book is remarkably thorough); above all, in the unspeakable spiritual incarceration of the individual. One comparison will clinch the point. René's wife Hester commits suicide, she throws herself under a truck; it is in much the same way and even for something of the same reasons as Anna Karenina. Tolstoi recorded his scene directly, and his context for it was a lively railway platform, with children, cheerful young men, a rosy-faced coachman, lace on Anna's costume, a sinister little *peasant* working on the rails. In *Self Condemned*, René hears of his wife's suicide by a telephone call at a dinner party: there is a taxi caught in the street; a police officer at his table in a bare room; a bell and a glass of water to stop René vomiting; and the mortuary slab with its concentration camp *graffito* described with one touch of pity, and otherwise complete painterly exactitude.

Easily Lewis's most powerful account of the megalopolitan is in *The Childermass* (the massacre of the innocents), and its sequels making up *The Human Age*.[1] These books are not set in London or New York, but in the afterlife and the underworld. They take their reader into Limbo and Purgatory and on into Hades. Lewis was presumably unable to complete the final volume before he died: even so, the work constitutes his most ambitious and impressive record of the megalopolitan. But if it does so, it is by what is almost a poetic method: Lewis selects certain features of the real world, and intensifies them until they interlock with the compelling force of a trauma. In *The Childermass*, the megapolis of "Third City" is always in view, but it is across the river. The quality of its life is only reflected in the interminable preliminaries to reaching it, the barren and forbidding fog-swept landscape with its gangs of (in effect) convicts who are violent if they can be; and above all in the central figure of the book, the Bailiff who is the Charon of this Lewisian Styx, and who switches to and fro between inexhaustible vulgar loquacity, uncompromising self-

[1]Volumes two and three of *The Human Age*, *Monstre Gai* and *Malign Fiesta*, were published in England by Methuen in 1955, and are to be brought out in the U. S. by Farrar, Straus and Cudahy in the fall. The final volume, *The Trial of Man*, was presumably unfinished.

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advertisement, and ruthless, aimless, Punch-and-Judy brutality. The work as a whole looks as if it owes a good deal to *The Castle* and to *Ulysses*; it is certainly too diffuse and sometimes too heavily gesticulated; but it displays an astonishing richness and fertility, and for 1927 (when it was published) a remarkable prescience.

It is important to notice the *depth* at which the essential impression in *The Human Age* is created. Angeltown, a kind of Frank Lloyd Wright garden city, appears briefly at the end of volume three, but in the present context it has little importance. Third City itself is a place of luxury hotels and service suites, banks and limitless credit, cafés and vast piazzas, aimless crowds in flashy ties or immaculate city suiting, public orators, crowds massacred by armed police, occasional attacks from outside with (seemingly) atomic weapons, and behind it all an interminable bureaucracy which becomes more and more suave and uncomprehending as the narrative penetrates closer and closer to its core. Matapolis in Hades has fewer windows and more patina, but in reality it is a concentration-camp city, full of police guards and punishment cells and amiable inhabitants for whom the word "humanity" is meaningless, save as reminder of the queer ease with which humans die under torture. But it is not the *properties*, as one might call them, of these cities which mainly create their significant record. Rather it is the way in which the narrative as a whole conveys the tone and rhythm of the megalopolitan world. Through the whole book move the two figures from earth, representing the two basic human types as Lewis sees them (in *The Art of Being Ruled* he borrowed Goethe's distinction between "puppets" and "natures" for this distinction, and it is one of each we see here). They move through the two cities at the aimless, decorous, dusty pace of modern leisure. They seek to comprehend, they seek a job which (until almost the very end) neither finds. It is through this pattern of interminable appointments and interviews and targetless disquiet, that Lewis essentially re-creates the mid-twentieth century world. As always when it is significant, insight is carried by the total narrative.

V

There is a counterpart in Lewis's work to this vision of the modern megapolis. This is the picture of a drab, denuded, under-

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cultivated countryside in, say, "The Bishop's Fool": a story which in spite of its touches of polemic and journalism, develops a quite remarkable power. Needless to say, it offers an incomplete version of the contemporary reality in Britain, and in some ways it even fits the 1930s better than the present time. An early counterpart of it is the "time-hallucination" scene in *The Childermass*, when a mirage of the faded cosiness of rural England, ploughman and rook and horse and hedge all harmlessly devoid of life, turns up as a momentary pocket in the red landscape of the Bailiff's Limbo. It is proper equivalent to the nightmare of the Big City.

Lewis, though, was no mere Jeremiah futilely declaiming against decay. He knew that decay means transmutation; and perhaps the most admirable thing about his whole achievement as a man was the seemingly intense effort of concentration which he brought to apprehend and register this transmutation; even to accept it, to adapt himself to it, in spite of clear and profound revulsion. What emerges above all from *The Art of Being Ruled* is the conviction of an imminent planetary change in human life so profound as essentially to be a transmutation in the biological sense. This is just what Lewis states of the central figure in *The Red Priest*: "He is the last of a species (to which we all belong) and in him in travail—and there are none of us do not experience the travail too—is another species." The source of the transformation is indicated as early as *The Caliph's Design*: — "the machine as a new mode of being". *Paleface* clarifies the point, and performs the important service of clarifying how certain of Lewis's particular aversions seem to him (arbitrarily, I would for the most part concede) to be applications of the one general principle. "As the White spirit shrinks, oppressed under its burden of war, business insecurity, blood-tax . . . " and whatever else results from the machine world which once annihilated the red man, but now is rounding upon its presumptuous white employer, — as that spirit shrinks, it regresses along certain lines of thought and attitude which simplify for it a cosmos too tense and complex to be received whole any longer. Back to nature (Lawrence's cult of the red man), back to childhood, back to female intuition. Two more of Lewis's bugbears, homosexuality and lesbianism, fit the same scheme: the machine-dominated personality turns to these, as it would turn to anything, in its galvanic search for what will sustain the sexual engine. *Time and Western Man* threads an-

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other strand into the total fabric. The modern preoccupation in writing with process, becoming, the stream of consciousness (Joyce and Gertrude Stein) was mistaken by its originators for a cult of the alive and organic: yet what it ultimately offered the reader was not the living movement of the rational consciousness, but a mind turned mechanical and automatic. All these exemplify modern man's "will to live as a machine". "Our epoch finds its highest expression in dynamical puppets," Lewis writes in *The Vulgar Streak*.

The discursive, polemical books are scrappy, prolix, tangential to their main arguments or even centrifugal from them, and, above all, written with a kind of smudging, fudging abundance of style which exhausts and bewilders and exasperates. But we must recognize, however, the kind of problem and the kind of mind they present. What these books present is something like a metaphysical system: one compares Hegel, Kierkegaard, Bergson. All the many aspects of experience are made to turn one way, are made to reverberate to the one note which sounds throughout them. Often enough, no doubt, the assimilations are arbitrary; subject them to close scrutiny, they collapse. But the total vision has a power and an integration and above all a *relevance* which make it survive local fissures. In Lewis the links are not metaphysical, not created by logic; they are loosely empirical, itself a symptom of our time. Yet so far as total apprehension goes the quality of system is there all the same. Negative, on the whole, in the earlier books ("Human nature has brought us to Ice Age conditions" in *Blasting and Bombardiering*), in the latest ones it constitutes the fullest confrontation of our own time and future which is known to me. "We have been forcibly, violently reborn" (*Rotting Hill*). Particularly important in this connection is the chapter called "In Praise of Rootlessness" in *America and Cosmic Man* (1948):

> . . . occasionally in the air [of America] one thinks that one detects something so far not met with; the electric intoxication of the air breathed by prisoners set free. The American air is conditioned by these immigrant multitudes, hollow with the great *ouf!* with which they have turned their back upon the European world . . . *I ought perhaps to say that our America, at the opening of what has been called the "atomic age" is not any longer across the seas. Instead, it is a time, not a place; namely, the cosmic era which lies beyond the ruin and disintegration of atomic war.* [My italics.]

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Someone has really looked into the future, tried to catch its very feel, and come back to tell.

VI

The discursive works are often thought-provoking, it is true; yet one turns back with relief to the novels. Admittedly, they have their wooden patches; on the other hand, from time to time they are superbly taut and vivid and incisive. But the remarkable fact about Lewis's work is his capacity for what Arnold called *architectonic*. The insight drives deeper and deeper through the movement of a book's narrative. This power of Lewis's fiction to establish itself dynamically, as the total unity takes shape in sequence under the reader's eye, is strong enough to override the sometimes ill-digested discursive digressions, or the clumsy turns of dialogue. In his best novels—*The Revenge for Love*, *Self Condemned*, *The Human Age*—the distinctive sequential integrity of fiction is achieved, and local flaws barely impair the considered record that it conveys.

This movement is visible in *Tarr*, although that book is not, I think, truly successful. One by one the characters drop into the ritual act by which they assume their role and betray their essential puppetry. ("Tarr had witnessed, not himself at all, but another man snatched into his role.") Bertha poses for Kreisler, Kreisler strikes Soltyk, Tarr marries his discarded mistress because she is pregnant with Kreisler's child. In *Snooty Baronet* (a minor though remarkably clear and unified novel), the affairs of Kell-Imrie, the detached and superior *libertin* who tells the story and depicts himself as the only man with a rational intelligence, are taken just to the point where he is seen to have been the puppet of puppets: public opinion, he writes at the end, has it that "I have become *unhinged* (that is the expression, as if I were a door)". Vincent Penhale (*The Vulgar Streak*), seeming at first to be the gifted poor boy making good, the intelligence shrewdly at work among a set of mediocrities, emerges finally as having lived in a kind of automatic and disastrous somnambulism, blind to the humanity that uninsistently surrounded him. (Mr. Hugh Kenner, by the way, has little ground for seeing Penhale as a part-portrait of the author.) *The Revenge for Love* and *Self Condemned* raise another important matter to be touched on in a moment. *The Human Age*

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cannot now be decisively assessed: but one may hazard a guess that the whole work would have recounted, in symbolic rather than allegoric form, Lewis's idea of the planetary transition from boom megapolis through nuclear cataclysm into "my America, my new-found land", the era (if any) after the fusion.

Now for the total movement of narrative in *The Red Priest*. I should be extremely surprised if Lewis himself looked on this work as a trivial interim piece, which is what most of his English reviewers suggested. If he did, I should venture to think him mistaken. The novel makes it clear that the Red Priest himself, though his parish is in the West End and his wife from the English upper classes, is "a man from one of the backward epochs of humanity", a "Cromagnon". Given the depth of the fissure over which Lewis sees humanity now poised, however, he is not all that backward. Even his name, *Augustine Card*, may point to his meaning: he gropes (I would claim no more than this) towards representing the whole phase of history between that Doctor who founded an era of Western Culture, and the precarious house of Cards which it now is. And surely, with his yearning to fuse Christianity and Communism, his intellectual curiosity that only leads on to disaster, his immense physical power that he cannot keep from senseless violence, his greed and love of display, his incapacity not to draw on capital and devour his inheritance,[2] his desire to justify himself and be a scapegoat all at once, surely with all these things he is a representative figure for the "backward epoch" in which we ourselves have all been living. If so, what happens to him in the course of the story is what completes the meaning: of his own accord he destroys his London environment, plunges back into the frozen primitivism of the Canadian North-West, and meets his death in an obscure scuffle in an igloo. "Human nature has brought us to ice-age conditions." To complete the allegory, Augustine's posthumous son is born on the shores of a lake in Africa. Lewis does not commit himself. The son's name is Zero.

VII

Only now, I believe, is it time to revert to the passage from Arnold, and consider what Lewis offers as "the judgment which

[2]It is borrowed, in fact, from his wife; and is ultimately a windfall from Africa.

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almost insensibly forms itself . . . along with fresh knowledge." In large part, Lewis's judgment upon modernity has emerged already, carried by the insight into our world which is the fresh knowledge his work offers. To diagnose his diagnosis is to reveal what he has taken his stand against. Yet something must be said about the positive values which transpire from his work. Too often, Lewis is taken simply as a champion of the intellect. That this attitude is present in his discursive writings is clear enough. But Lewis's fiction draws on more of his mind than his polemics; and it tells a different story. An early work like *Tarr* may not do so; and indeed, the picture in that book of the heroine's talent for discussing art in the intervals of showing off her legs, and the way in which she is offered as a womanly ideal, are radical failures. Lewis has gone a long way since then, though. *The Human Age* is perhaps a test case. Here Pullman, the central mortal character, is superbly subtle and intelligent; it is he, in fact, who repeatedly breaks through to a comprehension of the environment, and his human shrewdness stands in contrast to the rigid simplicity, the almost silly innocence, of the angelic nature. Yet as the narrative advances, we find more and more that this intelligence is what transpires in Pullman as damnable. Ultimately he out-devils the devil, becomes his Chief of Staff, teaches him how to corrupt even the fallen angels a little further. Yet there is a redeeming side to Pullman; and it is nothing other than his obscure but growing awareness of the evil of his intelligence, and growing desire to abandon its pretensions and ask simply for forgiveness.

To clinch this, one might take a scene in the book which seems to clinch the opposite. Driving with Pullman through the savage landscape of Hell, Satan throws a promiscuous Frenchwoman to be deflowered and eaten alive by wild-animal devils. The seeming venom against sexuality might be taken as confirming Lewis's misogyny, his loathing of physical love. It confirms nothing of the kind:

> Pullman was trembling . . . the woman's denunciation of Sammael immediately before the climax had affected him in a way he had to be very careful not to reveal. His sympathy for the woman grew and subterraneously developed; . . . he started trembling as in response to horror, because of the violent conflict in his psyche. He was on the verge of an outburst. The woman, praying and crossing herself, was doing what he ought to have done.

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What she had said to Satan, as she did this, was "You believe you are a handsome man . . . Yours is a beast's head, and not a man's. You are an animal—not one of the high animals . . . " Pullman, on the other hand, seeking to extenuate a momentary touch of concern on his part, tells Satan that he has acquired the habits of the unintelligent, *though himself of the small intelligent minority*. It is this intelligence, the whole scene conveys, which brings it about that he can steel himself against the atrocity, and continue his drive as the devil's smooth and favoured visitor.

Self Condemned also springs its surprise. In the first third of the book, René poses as the superior man, the intelligence in a world of nitwits, and his wife seems silly, sexy, and slightly nasty. By the beginning of the Canadian section, one notices that Hester's frilly charm is less in evidence than her preventing care: it is she who refuses to be nostalgic or to give way. As time passes, it is she who sees that René is making the adaptation to New World life at the price of himself, and who remains a thin though authentic source of human feeling and spontaneity. Canada may be something she cannot adapt herself to ("I am much too old to change my way of thinking and feeling"). It may in the end crush her out in suicide. But she is the one who retains her integrity. René gets his established place in a New World university. What is he then? "Only a half-crazed replica of his former self . . . a gutted shell or . . . empty hangover of himself . . . a glacial shell of a man." He, in fact, settles for a living death. Hester lives with a true if modest life. It is this same quality of gentleness and patience and simple true affection which emerges in Margot's feeling for Victor Stamp, the one valid attitude throughout the whole world of mechanical self-importance and rancour and greed of *The Revenge for Love*. What this superb novel seems to me to do is gradually to focus out, and then (in final tragic assertion) to *crush* out the one human attitude which the author can endorse with his whole mind. Here is his endorsement, and savage irony against the opposite, in the closing paragraph of the book:—

> But meanwhile a strained and hollow voice, part of a sham culture outfit, but tender and halting, as if dismayed at the sound of its own bitter words, was talking in his ears, in a reproachful singsong. It was denouncing him out of the past, where alone now it was able to articulate; it was singling him out as a man who led people into mortal danger, people who were dear beyond expression to the possessor of

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> the passionate, the artificial, the unreal, yet penetrating, voice, and crying to him now to give back, she implored him, the young man, Absolom, whose life he had had in his keeping, and who had somehow, unaccountably, been lost, out of the world and out of Time! He saw a precipice. And the eyes in the mask of THE INJURED PARTY dilated in a spasm of astonished self-pity. And down the front of the mask rolled a sudden tear, which fell upon the dirty floor of the prison.

There is the same endorsement, at another level of achievement, in the tradition-rooted dignity and patience and unobtrusive affection represented by Victor's wife in *The Vulgar Streak*, or by Augustine's in *The Red Priest*. Perhaps also there is something similar in René's Canadian friends McKenzie and Trevelyan.

This side of Lewis is vitally relevant: it shows a compassion, even an affection, for humanity taken at its most simple and spontaneous and unassuming. It redeems his work from aridity and severity, and confirms it as an affirmation of mankind, even if (and is there no cogency in this?) a limited and chastened and saddened one. Some of Lewis's paintings (the lyrical portrait of Mrs. Honeyman, for instance; and above all, several portraits, named or otherwise, of the artist's wife) go further; they convey a real sense of exhilaration, of beauty, of delight in the things of the world. But in his writing he lacks access to a rich fount of joyful awareness, of the raw material of regeneration, such as was in the main open to Lawrence. Yet this, attractive though it is, cannot be thought essential to a writer. What is essential is what will sustain in the reader, in spite of satire or pessimism, a conviction that the work has grown from judgment and control, not from total repudiation and blind rancour. Neither Lawrence nor Lewis succeeds here unfailingly: but both do so in the main; and while it is true that Lawrence can show an awareness of human potentiality far greater than Lewis's, it is also true that his repudiation of the contemporary scene can be more sweeping and exasperated. Besides this, he did not, I think, make the basic adjustment of which there are signs in some of Lewis's latest works. These, notably *America and Cosmic Man*, reveal a gusto,[3] a zeal for

[3]A little-known passage from the early *Caliph's Design* is relevant: "simply for human life at all — . . . to increase gusto and the belief in that life — it is of the first importance that the senses should be directed into such channels, appealed to in such ways, that this state of mind of relish, fulness and exultation should obtain . . . It is life at which you must aim . . . life, full life, is lived through the fancy, the senses, consciousness." The general context, of course, is that of the visual arts.

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life, which drive Lewis towards seeing the present as bringing a future which, though radically new, may yet bring its radical good.

I should be sorry to close this essay on Lewis by speaking only of the values to which his work testifies. Most important of all in his life's whole work is his insight into the case of twentieth century man; his unique vision of the watershed, or the abyss, of the present. Most important in his fiction is his capacity to transmit and to intensify both his insight and the judgment that passes insensibly with it, through the total unifying movement of narrative. His ideas were always developing, and his work always had to be exploratory of them. He strained his powers to the uttermost or beyond. He probably wrote too much too carelessly. There are enough bad patches and loose ends, it may be said, to prevent any of his books from being unreservedly a masterpiece. Yet there is no real doubt by now that Wyndham Lewis established himself as among the great writers of the century, and among (if not quite equal to) Yeats, Lawrence, Eliot and the other geniuses born in the astonishing decade of the 1880s. For 1957, for the immediate future, I see him as the most directly relevant of them all.

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JEAN GARRIGUE

Swiss Altitudes

Traveling might be truly extraordinary
For the heart that would ever be dashed
In its expectation of royal fable,
Wonder, most monstered genius,
If on some Simplon Tunnel Express
One had as companions seriously faced
A pleasant sheep dressed up in shawl
And knitting from her own grey wool,
A goat with spectacles and spats
Reading a Latvian journal.

As it is, bolt upright in the less wandered land
Of the wonderland of four languages
When the fifth must be the language of eyes
Which is more than one might have with a bird
Singing in open impassioned Italian
Or a dense bear sputtering German
Most remarkably the gentleman traveling for a firm
And the lady going to a station beyond Lausanne
Parley of Chillon and Leman
As we rock in the darkness and wait
In the pure diction of the French nation
For the next language of morning.

We are nevertheless when it happens
Struck down by wands on our eyes.
It is an assault of simple surprise
That by the heights we have climbed to
Lie open meadows, a fall of their bodies,
So calm and abiding on the broad calm
Of the earth's deep crown,
So ambrosially open and mild
There on the rounded top of the world
It was an inscrutable opening
Into heights rushing up beyond bounds

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Into plateaus removed, into space so blanched
It was more than earthen,
Like music unfounded,
Like the *desinvolture* of clouds,
And rich, surely rich, in the affinities
Of a time known by the angels.

There might Apollo's cattle be feeding
Led by the broad, low, wide-spaced calm
Of the Alpine horn. Snow-dusted,
Tranquilly lagging, one after one,
On delicate feet massively treading
In a transfiguration of sails of the wind
Up through the oubliettes of passes
Into a trackless region.

Some later, while snow plumes massed arms in the air,
Riding the little cars to Glion
Where the watches of the *Rochers de Naye*
Stand silvern, clouds changing over their faces
War-like mutations of sombre Excalibur glitter,
I saw on the next mountain down
Other clouds nestling in crevices,
All in such fine fronds of plumes
You would have said they were mere light-veined birds,
Naturally swans, resting there.

And some after that, the well-bearded skier
Of such a dark lofty bearing
One felt instinctively it were better not to look at him.
Nevertheless one did.
He rode a ways on the mountain car
In the powdering blow, and got out.
Far later, miles down at a mountan stop
Where the driver braked and descended
He arrived, in a whirlpool of snow dust,
The pallor of it all over him,
Well-bearded in the endowment
Of his sober and youthful manhood.

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Above him a mutiny of clouds
Driven by thin-veined air
Veined like those marble sides
That rear dolphin-headed their crests
Crest upon crest in a progression of towers
In an infinite progression, their crevice-gashed edges
Rising edges to the world's edge air.

And he in the darkness of white
Out of the whole aloof wind-eagling continent
Of incandescent earth-castling oblivion
In the fierce flame of the air blowing white
From off those dolmens stag-headed
Shining forth in his solitude like a star
From the amplitude of his being.

And as he stood there, at sudden ease,
Laughing, it seemed, into my ear
For the dumbfounded token of my admiration,
I shall not say anything else than that
Though I go round the world
I will not forget him,
Thereafter being most content
Having come for what I must otherwise have invented,
A wildness whose glance no civilization may endure.

The Hunt

The beast of pleasure that some seek
In the paradisal chase
For which no man would dream of putting down
Arms until that beast is found,
Vanishes as soon as had.
Beast of want, delirium made,
Of his unbridled appetite
He must die when it is fed.

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A beast but by another war,
An aerial beast some hunt
Without a name and past all want
Except as from the eyes looks out
His shadow on some cloudy slope.
He is a beast of pleasure too,
A shape of joy and smooth like fire
Who would not be by having caught
Nor thus surprised nor sought
In his mazy element.

The beast created by the act
Is fitful, moody and impatient,
He comes to vanquish, is imperious,
Cannot be summoned by a word
But must be had by want,
Is born of that and vanishes with deed.

The other being of nature less
Than that moon in its pale hour
When from its glitter pours such power
As drowns and maddens simple sight
Changeling in an element
Changing and unchanging
Starves while he would feed delight.

The one suffices much, no doubt,
Being of nature all compact
With beast and beastly back
In the beast-creating act.
Gay goes at least the merry chase
Of pleasure's war its crazy lengths
As kiss may dally with that inward breath
That is, it's said, the soul,
To slake the spirit and the sense.

But oh my other beast,
When from your shadows you would start
So wild a mythy train moon-stained

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Down templed night flocks up
A wine so mixed with mad moon cloud
We hunt with the predestined then
And this appears the difference:
It has no aim nor seeks us not
For that promise of content
That the furious hunt would get.

And is more constant with me
Than fealties I swore
To those arms of fire and eyes
Wherein was founded paradise
Although you live in gusts of time
Coming when you least are sought
To overpower the naked thought
As if from lofts beyond the skies
Where stay all banished mysteries
And thus my paradise is where
You dwell, as music does, in air.

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STANLEY KUNITZ

The Way Down

1. Time swings her burning hands.
I saw him going down
Into those mythic lands
Bearing his selfhood's gold,
A last heroic speck
Of matter in his mind
That ecstasy could not crack
Nor metaphysics grind.
I saw him going down
Veridical with bane
Where pastes of phosphor shine
To a cabin underground
Where his hermit father lives
Escaping pound by pound
From his breast-buckled gyves;
In his hermit father's coat,
The coat without a seam,
That the race, in its usury, bought
For the agonist to redeem,
By dying in it, one
Degree a day till the whole
Circle's run.

2. When the magician died, I wept,
I also died, I under leaf forgot
The stars, the distaff, and the crystal bowl.
I hugged the ignorance of stone
Under the line of the crickets' thunder
Where the white chariot of the winter sun
Raced to the axle-pole.
Why am I suddenly warm all over?
By the small mouths of the rain
I'm tempted. Must I learn again to breathe?
Help me, my worldlings, leave
To the hoot-owl in the dismal wood

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His kingdom of blight
And empty branching halls.
Air thickens to dirt.
Great hairy seeds that soar aloft
Like comets trailing tender spume
Break in the night with soft
Explosions into bloom.
Where the fleshed root stirs,
Marvelous horned strong game,
Brine-scaled, dun-caked with mould,
Dynastic thunder-bison, Asian-crude,
Bedded in moss and slime,
Wake, and the rhythm of their blood
Shoots through the long veins of my name.
Hail, thickets! Hail, dark stream!

3. Time swings her burning hands.
The blossom is the fruit,
And where I walk, the leaves
Lie level with the root.
My brave god went from me.
I saw him going down
Incorrigibly wild
In a cloud of golden air.
O father in the wood,
Mad father of us all,
King of our antlered wills,
Our candelabrum-pride
That the pretender kills,
Receive your dazzling child
Drunk with the morning-dew
Into your fibrous love
Wherewith creation's strung
Although the last heart die;
Embrace him in our stead,
Keeping the old time young,
And hold him through the night
Our best hopes share, as bright,
As peerless as a cock's eye.

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ALASTAIR REID

Casa D'Amunt

However gracefully
the spare leaves of the fig tree
in fullness overhead
with native courtesy
include us in their shade,
among the rented flowers
we keep a tenant's station.
The garden is not ours.

Under the arching trellis,
the gardener moves below.
Observe him on his knees
with offering of water
for roots that are not his,
tendering to a power
whose name he does not know,
but whom he must appease.

So do we too accord
the windings of the vine
and whimsies of the olive
a distant mute oblation
and a respectful word,
aware of having put,
in spite of cultivation,
the worm within the fruit.

This garden tenancy
corrects our habitual eye.
Now, water and the moon
join what we do not own.
The rent is paid in breath,
and so we freely give
the apple tree beneath
our unpossessive love.

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Dear one, our present Eden
lays down this one condition:
we should not ask to wait.
No angel will drive us out,
but time, without a word,
will show among the flowers,
sure as a flaming sword.
The garden is not ours.

In Such a Poise is Love

Why should a hint of winter
darken the window while the insects enter,
or a feel of snowfall, taking corners off
the rough wall and the roof,
while the sun, hanging in the sky,
hotly denies its contrary?

As if it knew all futures will entail
probable tempered by improbable,
so the mind wanders to the unforseen,
and the eye, waking, poises between
shock and recognition — the clothes, the chair,
bewildering, familiar.

In such a poise is love. But who
can keep the balance true,
can stay in the day's surprise, moving
between twin fears, of losing and of having?
Who has not, in love's fever,
insisted on one simple vow, 'for ever',
and felt, before the words are gone,
the doom in them dawn?

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RICHMOND LATTIMORE

Demeter in the Fields

Demeter in the fields walks down the green
slopes, by the grooves of springs and in the grass
of watercourses and the cottonwoods
that cloud and mark the long slant of the valley
on the piled silt of mythic river kings.
This land, spelled in the legends of its names,
dreaming as in a bell of glass at noon,
or closed beneath Orion in the sky
fixed striding, where the daughters of the dove
shine on the bull's black shoulder, and the bear
wheels her bright dipper on the polar star,
this land is hers, who wades in the grain, who turns
the colors of the sloping soil and sees
brown changed to green in May and green to gold
in June.

This is the goddess of the grain
who by the sea at the horns of rock and by
the time of air burned into day's end, stood
to curse the world with salt, for Death and the Maiden,
for laps of flowers and the young hair so seized
and raped; for her lost daughter in the ground.
But this was marriage, and the seeding of years.
The hairy god and his bright virgin keep
the subterranean ritual, and their loins
swarm up in gold and children of the corn,
and on these slopes Demeter of the fields,
the mother, centered in a trinity,
walks softly as the wings of her folded hands
cradle a blessing on the yield of pain.

She is the noon siren sleep. She gives
love under lattices while the clock nods
and blood hums in its drain. She is the sense
of separation and surrender, she

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the drowsy sphinx of summer in whose lens
the serpent and the dove conspire to burn.
Her unintelligible magic swims
across the present eyes of men and girls
dreaming along the tawny heaves of fields.

Now in the young time of the year they come
to cut the bronzed and bearded heads of wheat,
stack the lopped grain in golden walls, and blow
the dusty yield of summer into bread,
then homeward, blade on shoulder, hand in hand,
walk slow between the piles of the year's wealth
past the white chapels mounded on the hills
crossed with the arms of Christ, and consecrate
to Mary Panaghía and her saints,
to Isis, Ashtaroth, and the blood of the moon,
to female earth, Demeter in the fields.

WINTHROP PALMER

Leeward

Running up the sand
the wind catches the water
and gives it a flogging.

Makes sure also the sun has a cloud
over his face

And that young palm trees
with their arms full of coat hangers
pitch into the verandahs.

Lift up your long hair, cane field,
and release the blue heron.

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The Dancer

Before all else a body, economical, spare and menacing as a whip,
All of a piece in every movement also, flung as a whip and not stopped
Not pausing but perfect in the clean definition of a design in space,

Across a table or in the character of a woman seated in a chair
As though a lantern lit within by a small, steady candle,
Companionable with shadows or the dark, reluctant to spread out,
Contriving the magic of half light and giant blackness from reluctance,

Occasionally appearing before or within an architecture of words but as a transient only
And hurriedly leaving the artifice of language for the nature of bone, flesh and blood.
The face composed to match the movement, a mask, dyed in the colors of mood or appetite,
At home in the imagination only
Dangerous at all other times and in defined area,
May be called the demon fury of human being.

The White Gods

Out of the quarried hills a pale road
Uncoils itself and slides away. Savage chain,
Your stones fashion the feathers of a bird,
The jaws of earth, the mouth of rain,
The Heavenly Bodies, also the Guardians of the dead.

But the soft tongue of the Hidalgo, Aztec,
Has entered the bosom of your sombre queen
As under the absent eyes of Indians
And before their silent faces
The heart of the present is torn out alive.

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HARVEY SWADOS

Joe, the Vanishing American

If Walter had not been so desperately anxious to go away to college he might never have been able to stick it out those first few weeks at the factory. His father, once district sales manager for a bankrupt sewing-machine concern, had come down in the world and was now a continually uneasy clerk in the branch office of a usury outfit called the Friendly Finance Corporation; his mother, who had borne Walter late in life, clung jealously to the fading prestige conferred on her by her many beneficences on behalf of the Ladies' Guild.

Walter had never done anything harder than shovel the neighbors' snowy driveways and sell magazines to reluctant relatives. But the night of his graduation from high school his father grunted in a choked voice that there was no money to send him to college. Walter swore to himself that he would get a college education if he had to rob a bank. At the commencement exercise a classmate had told him that you could get a job at the new auto assembly plant if you said on your application that you had worked as a garage mechanic. While his parents rocked creakily, proud but miserable, on the porch glider, Walter mounted the narrow steps to his little room and sat down at his desk. If he could work steadily at the plant for a year he ought to be able to save several thousand dollars even after contributing his share of the household expenses. Without saying a word to his parents, he went to the plant the following morning and filled out an application blank. Three days later he received a telegram asking him to report for work at six-thirty a.m.

When he returned, grey and exhausted, from his first long day in the body shop to which he had been assigned, Walter found his mother sitting in the parlor and sobbing into a handkerchief. She raised her eyes at the slamming of the door and stared at him in horror.

"Look at you!" she cried, and immediately Walter knew that her first shock was at the way he *looked*, not at how he must have *felt*. Nevertheless Walter felt it his filial duty to explain that he

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would not have to march past the neighbors in greasy coveralls, but could wear sport clothes to work and change at the plant; furthermore, he hinted, when his mother was preparing his sandwiches for the next day's lunch, he could just as easily carry them in a little paper sack as in a metal lunchbox.

His father, keeping them company in the kitchen, took a different tack, and even blustered a little about the advantages of working for a huge corporation.

"I don't see why Walter couldn't have started with something more pleasant," his mother said plaintively, smoothing mayonnaise across white bread. "In an office he could at least use his brains."

"Don't kid yourself," her husband replied. "There's no shame attached to factory work any more. Besides, Walter has a darned good chance to advance if he shows them the stuff he's got."

Implicit in all this was his parents' fear that Walter had started down a dead-end street, and their own shame at not having been able to send him away to college. Anxious not to inflame their feelings, Walter refrained from defending his decision; even if he were only to point out that he would be making big money, it would be a direct insult to his father, who at fifty-nine was making only five dollars a week more than his son. So he put the case negatively.

"There's just no place else around," he said, "that would pay me anything like what I'm going to be making at the auto plant."

"The boy is right, mother," his father said decisively, much to Walter's satisfaction. "You're doing the smart thing, Walter."

Thus challenged at home, Walter had no alternative but to grit his teeth and swear to himself that nothing would make him quit until he had reached his goal. Like a groggy but game boxer, he measured out his future not with the end of the fight in view, for that would have been too far away, but rather in terms of more immediate accomplishments: his first automatic nickel raise at the end of four weeks, his second automatic nickel raise at the end of eight weeks, his acceptance as a permanent employee at the end of ninety days, and most of all his listing as a metal-finisher, which would mean that he would be in the highest-paid group in the plant and that he would be recognized as a skilled worker, a man who had made the grade.

His surroundings meant nothing to Walter, who had not expected that the factory would look like an art gallery; but the

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work, and the conditions under which he had to do it, were a nightmare of endless horror from which Walter sometimes thought, stumbling wearily out of the plant after ten hours of unremitting anguish, he would one day awaken with a scream. It was not simply that the idea of working on an endless succession of auto bodies as they came slowly but ineluctably rolling down the assembly line like so many faceless steel robots was both monotonous and stupefying, or that the heavy work of finding bumps and dents in them, knocking them out and filing them down, was in itself too exhausting.

No, it was the strain of having to work both fast and accurately, with the foreman standing over him and glaring through his thick-lensed glasses, that made Walter dread the beginning of each day. Under the best of conditions, he figured, he had three and a half minutes to complete his metal-finishing work from the time he started a job on his line to the time it reached the platform and was swung off on hooks toward the bonderizing booth. If he began at the very beginning, as soon as the inspector had indicated bad spots with a stump of chalk, circling hollows and x-ing high spots, he could finish before the job reached the final inspector at the far end of the line—unless the dents were too deep or too numerous, in which case he was still madly pounding and filing, squatting and straining with the sweat running down his temples and his cheekbones while the solder-flower worked next to him in a tangle of rubber hose, melting lead and a blazing gun with a flame so hot that it scorched dry the running sweat on his face, and the final inspector stood over him, imperturbably chalking newly-discovered hollows and pimples in the infuriating metal. Then he would straighten up from his hopeless effort and with a despairing glance at the impassive pick-up man, who had to finish what he had left undone, he would hurry back down the line, praying to dear God that the next car—he did every third one—would be in fairly decent condition.

Worst of all were the times when he would hear a piercing whistle and would look up from the damnable dent at which he had been rapping blindly with the point of his file, to see Buster the foreman all the way past the platform, waving angrily with his cigar. Hurrying from his unfinished work to his punishment, Walter would try to steel himself against what he knew was coming, but it was no use.

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"You call yourself a metal man?" Buster would ask, stuffing the cigar between his teeth with an angry snap. "You want to get metal-finisher's pay and you let a job like that go through?" His eyes glinting with rage behind his thick spectacles, Buster would gesticulate at one of Walter's cars, freshly speckled with chalk marks as it swung in the air. "Get going on it!"

And Walter would hurl himself at the job, dashing the sweat from his brow with the back of his gloved hand and filing away in a clumsy fury.

By the time he had somehow or other repaired what he had left undone, he would find on hastening back to the line that he was far behind once again in his regular work, so far behind that it might take him the better part of an hour to gradually work his way back on the line to where he really belonged, safe for the moment from shouted complaints.

Inevitably the men around him had suggestions as to how Walter might better his condition. Of the two other metal-finishers who worked on the line with him, one was a dour, fattish man, a leader in the opposition of the local union and disgusted because it did nothing to provide security for probationary employees like Walter.

"I'll tell you something else. There's countries where a bright young hard-working fellow like you, that wants to go to college, doesn't have to waste the best years of his life in factory work just to save the money for college fees. He gets sent right through school and the government foots the bills. All he has to do is show that he's got the stuff and his future is secure."

Walter allowed that this sounded fine, although "having the stuff" sounded uncomfortably like his father's eulogies of life in America, but he could not see what practical good it did him here and now—unless he was supposed to get satisfaction from the bitterness of knowing that in mysterious other countries his opposite numbers were better off than he.

The third metal-finisher, a lean efficient sardonic man, had been listening silently to this talk of free college careers. He put his wiry hand inside his open-necked khaki shirt, scratched the coarse curling hair below his throat, and laughed aloud.

"What's the matter?" asked his fattish colleague suspiciously.

"You think your propaganda's going to change this boy's ideas about the other side of the world when everything here tells him

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he's got it so good?" He tapped the fat man on the shoulder with the butt end of his file as patronizingly as if he were patting him on the head. "Even if he has to suffer for his education in a way that shouldn't be necessary, he's free. He can blunder around and maybe even learn something that isn't listed in the college catalogues. Those poor kids you want him to envy, they may be getting their college for nothing, but they're paying a higher price for it than this fellow ever will. And the sad part is that most of them probably don't even know what the price is." And he turned back to his work without giving the fat man a chance to reply.

Fortunately for the three of them, the fat metal-finisher was transferred. He was only replaced, however, by an intense worker with two vertical wrinkles between his brows, who watched Walter's ineffectual work with growing impatience. At last he could stand it no more.

"In this game, kid, the knack of it is in the speed. The speed," he said fiercely, "and the way you concentrate on the job. If you're going to fumble around and just bitch about your mistakes, you'll be a long time getting straightened out." He greeted his own badly dented job, rolling towards them, with a smile of genuine pleasure. "Size it up quick, pick out the worst dents, and get going on them right away. Leave the high spots for last—the pick-up men don't mind doing them."

The third man, the grey-haired cynic whom everyone liked but no one seemed to know, had been listening quietly, with a strange, mild grin on his long and youthful face. He put a stick of chewing gum in his mouth, ruminated for a moment, and said: "What you really want is for him to enjoy his work, Orrin. Might be more practical if you'd get down and actually show him how to do it. Here, hold on a minute, Walter."

Walter had been squatting on his haunches before the wheel-housing of his job, blindly pounding with a hammer at his hidden screwdriver, trying hopelessly to punch a hole underneath so that with the screwdriver he could dig out a deep dent as the others did, trying so hopelessly that as he smashed the hammer against his left hand, missing the butt end of the screwdriver, he had to squeeze his eyes to keep the tears from starting forth.

"Give me that screwdriver."

Handing up the tool to the laconic man, Walter noticed for the first time that he bore an unusual tattoo, faded like an old

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flag, on his right forearm: an American eagle, claws gripping his wrist, beak opened triumphantly at the elbow—you could almost hear it screaming. Without a word the man took the screwdriver and swiftly pressed it to a grinding wheel, fashioning a beveled point.

"Try it now."

Walter stuck the screwdriver under the car, rapped at it smartly several times—bang! it was through and resting against the outer skin of the car, just at the very dent. Gratefully, he turned to the grey-haired man, but he was gone, like a mirage.

There was something mirage-like about him, anyway. He drove to and from work alone, he never engaged in small talk, he never hung around with a group at lunch hour or before work, he kept a paper book in the hip pocket of his khaki trousers, and always when he was not concentrating on his own work, when he was watching Walter or listening to the others handing him advice, he had that mocking irreligious smile on his long narrow youthful face. What was more, his cold blue eye seemed always to be on Walter, sizing him up, watching not so much his work, as every one else did, but his temperament and his personality. It made him uncomfortable.

Gradually Walter began to sort out the other men around him, the ones who had more common reality in their talk and their tastes. Most companionable of them all was Kevin, the former rural school teacher, now an immigrant hook-man. His accent was so delightful, his turns of speech so happy, that Walter engaged the towering redhead in conversation at every opportunity.

"Hey, Kevin," he shouted at him one day, "how old were those kids you taught in County Kerry?"

"Ah, Walter," Kevin sighed, showing his long white teeth as he spoke, "they weren't *all* such children. If you were to see some of the older girls—quite well-developed, they were. Oh, how shameful if they had known what was passing through their schoolmaster's mind!"

Kevin laughed at the memory, Walter at the picture the big fellow conjured up of countryside lust; he turned around and there was the grey-haired metal-finisher, smiling too, but so coldly you would have thought him a scientist observing a successful experiment. It was chilling, and yet not wholly unpleasant. In a way that he could not define, Walter felt that he was being judged and approved.

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This third man, reserved and anonymous as ever, continued to observe him as Walter chatted not only with Kevin and the second metal-finisher, but with all of the other men on their line. Conversation was necessarily shouted and fragmentary, but Walter was astonished at how intimacies could be revealed in the course of a few phrases:

"A man's a fool to get married."

"Grab the overtime while you can. In the auto industry you never know when you'll be laid off."

"Happiest time of my life was when I was in the army."

"Only reason I'm here is because I was too stupid to learn a trade."

"I came here out of curiosity, but my curiosity's all used up."

"My wife says if I quit I'll have a better chance to line up a construction job."

"Walter, don't turn out like those college men who can tell you how to do everything but can't do a damn thing themselves."

The only one to rebuff Walter's friendly overtures was Pop, the seamy-faced little inspector with a rooster's ruff of yellowing white hair that rose and tumbled down over his forehead, and sunken old lips from which depended miraculously a heavy, unlit cigar. Wizened, pale and bloodless, he regarded Walter, for no apparent reason, with bottomless contempt. With a little cap perched sideways on his Niagara of a head like a precarious canoe, and a soft brown cloth knotted about the hand with which he probed Walter's work for defects and omissions, he seemed to Walter like some strange and hateful gnome.

"Kids like you," he said in a dry and rusty monotone, "they come and go. Twenty-three years I'm here, and I seen a million like you. Not steady, not reliable, don't want to learn, just out for fun. You'll never make a metal man."

I don't want to be a metal man, Walter wanted to reply; I just want to make my money and get out of here. But this was, he knew, just what Pop was goading him to say, so he held his tongue. A moment later he was glad that he had, for he was startled to hear the third metal-finisher address him.

"Pop is an exception," he said, bending over Walter's car and scrubbing at it with his sandpaper as he spoke. "By and large there is a democracy of age in the factory. Men who have been here since before you were born fought for a union contract guar-

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anteeing equal treatment for you. Ninety days after you start you get the same wage as a worker who's been on the job nineteen years. A man twice your age will treat you as a working partner and an adult. Where else is that true?"

"Yes," Walter replied angrily, "but Pop—"

"He's got reason to be bitter. Some day I'll tell you why."

He straightened up abruptly and walked away to his own job. But the words he had used reverberated in Walter's mind. Who was he, with his young-old face and his expressions like "democracy of age"? Walter asked, but no one seemed to know. Some said he was a seaman and adventurer, and his big tattoo was pointed to as proof, for he had been heard to state himself that he had acquired it in Lourenço Marques; but others, who had themselves come to the assembly line from rural homesteads, were positive from clues he had let fall that he had formerly been an itinerant farm laborer; and there were even those who swore that he was really an educated man, a kind of college professor amusing himself by slumming among them.

Whoever he was, for the time he had nothing more to say. But Walter felt his presence, for he was always ready to lend a hand, always laconically helpful, always silently observing and listening.

One day the younger inspector at the beginning of the line, blowing genial clouds of illegal pipe smoke, gave Walter some frank and cynical advice.

"Been listening to the bosses talking about you, buddy." He took the pipe from his mouth and formed a fat smoke ring. "Want to know what's wrong with what you're doing?"

"I guess so," said Walter dully.

"You try too hard. You're trying to do a good job—that's the worst thing you can do."

Walter stared in bewilderment at the inspector. "But why?"

"They're interested in pulling production. If you're going to be running up and down the line all day trying to make every job perfect, you're just going to get in people's way. What the bosses will do is, they'll look for an excuse to fire you before your probationary period is up, or else they'll stick you in a routine lower-paying job."

"Then . . . "

"I've been here ten years. Believe me," he drew on his pipe

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once again and smiled disarmingly, "they're not interested in making good cars, they're interested in making cars. You know what production means? Volume. And you know what they hired you for? To camouflage, not to get rid of every flaw. Hide them so they don't show up after the car's been through paint, so the customer doesn't see them at the dealer's, and you'll get along great."

"Camouflage them how?"

"With your sandpaper. With the grinding wheel. If you hit them up and down and then across, final inspection will never know what's underneath. Make it look good, and confusing. Be a camouflage artist and the bosses'll very seldom bother you."

Walter could not help laughing. "Listen, how could you stand it here for ten years? Every day I think maybe I ought to get out and look for something else."

"For six years," the inspector said pleasantly, "I was like you. This was going to be just temporary until I found something with a real future. It took me six years to realize that I was going to be spending the rest of my life here—it's like breaking in a wild horse, only with a human being it takes longer. I got married, had three kids, now I'm building a home near the plant. So I make the best of it, I take it easy and I have as much fun as I can, and I hate to see a guy like you breaking his back all for nothing."

Bending over his work, Walter raised his file and heard the inspector's final shot, lightly enough intended but bearing its own weight of bitterness and resignation: "You'd be surprised how many fellows I've heard talking just like you, couldn't stand the work, going to quit any day, and now they're five and ten year men, starting to think about retirement benefits."

Walter could not clarify in his own mind what it was about the inspector's attitude that increased his desperation, not until his silent partner eased up to him from nowhere and said quietly, "Kind of terrified you, didn't he?"

"Not exactly terrified."

"Just the same, it's no fun to be doing time and to be told that your sentence just might turn out to be indefinite. Then if you've got a good imagination you can see yourself gradually getting used to it, even getting to like the routine, so that one day follows another and the first thing you know the wrinkles are there and

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the kids are grown up and you don't know where it's all gone to, your life."

Walter felt himself shuddering. Was it from the blower overhead that he felt his hot sweat turning cold and drying on his face? He said, "I suppose you have to be cynical if you're going to stay here."

"Day after day your life becomes a joke without any point, a trick that you play on yourself from punching in to punching out."

"But that's only if you're an imaginative or a sensitive person."

For the first time, the man's angular face hardened. "Don't you think somebody like that inspector had his ambitions? Don't you think he still has his man's pride? Did you ever figure the cost of the job in terms of what it does to the personality of a clever intelligent fellow like him? He says if you're going to be trapped you might as well make the best of it, and by his lights he may be right. Anyway don't be too quick to blame him—he probably never had the opportunity to save money and go off to college."

No one had ever, not ever in eighteen years, talked to Walter in such a way. He would never again be able to look at a man like the inspector without compassion. Even at home in the evening with his father, whom he could no longer talk to about anyting but baseball or the weather (although they both tried clumsily to broach other more serious topics), Walter found that he was viewing this desolate man not just as his father but as a man who had his own miseries; and this, he knew, was a part of growing up that could not have come about as it had without the influence of his strange friend in the factory.

More and more as the weeks passed and exhaustion was gradually overcome by vitality, only to be transformed into monotony, Walter came to feel that only this man could explain the real meaning of the assembly line. But he remained aloof, insubstantial as a ghost. The more he held to himself, the more Walter was piqued, and determined to make the ghost speak.

At last one day he ventured to demand: "Say, what does that tattoo of yours stand for, that big bird?"

The man smiled with one side of his mouth. "That old bird is the American eagle." He raised his arm briefly, flexed it, and

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let it fall to his side. "It's screaming with rage at what's happened to the republic."

"What *has* happened?"

"Where are the guts? Where's the drive? In a place like this a man's life goes down the drain like scummy water."

"But you're working here too," Walter said boldly.

The man shook his head slowly, with such finality that there was something elemental about the gesture. "I'm not a settled-down man, I'm just passing through."

Walter cleared his throat. "I don't even know your name."

"Why should you? Instead of learning names, we refer to the fellow with the bad teeth, or the guy with the blue coveralls. When I work next to a man for months and learn that his wife is being operated on for cancer of the breast and still don't know his name, it tells me something not just about him and me, but about the half-connections that are all the factory allows you in the way of friendships."

"The old-timers are clubby enough, but everybody else claims they're here for a limited time. The place is so big and everything seems so temporary that I suppose we don't feel the need of introducing ourselves."

The older man looked at Walter somberly. "No one who comes here wants to admit that the place has any real connection with his real life. He has to say that he is just putting in his time here, and so no matter how friendly he is by nature he has to think of the people around him as essentially strangers, men whom he can't even trouble to say goodbye to when he quits or gets laid off."

"But *your* name—"

"Call me Joe."

Walter pursued him: "Every third guy on the line must be named Joe. Joe what?"

He smiled again, his long Yankee countenance creasing in a cold grin. "Joe, the vanishing American." And he turned his back on Walter and bent to his work as the line resumed its endless progress.

But he was a curious man, a nosey man, and he was there, listening and leering, when Walter found a minute to respond without cursing to a bitter remark of Pop's. Walter turned on

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him with the anger he had managed to suppress when speaking to the old inspector.

"It's easy for you to stand there and laugh. You think you're better than anybody else in the shop."

Joe hitched up his khaki trousers and replied with deliberate anger, "I never claimed that. I just read a little more and ponder a little more than the average fellow. That's why I don't laugh at them, I feel sorry for them. If I'm a little freer, I've had to make sacrifices for it—no dependents, no ties." He added cryptically, "They punish you one way or they punish you another way."

Walter did not quite understand, but it struck him that these remarks were a prelude to farewell. He asked uneasily, "You're not going to quit?"

"One of these days. Maybe the weather will turn, or I'll hear of something else, or I'll have words with Buster . . " He added with somewhat more warmth, "But I'll be back—if not here, some place like here. You won't, though. That's why I hope you won't forget what it was like for the people who made the things you'll be buying."

Walter cried indignantly: "How could I? How could I ever forget?" It seemed to him that the thick scurf of silver through which he shuffled as he worked, the glittering waste of lead filings and melted sticks, were so many needles, each carrying its stinging injection of memory—of sweat, exhaustion, harrying, feverish haste, and stupid boredom.

"You forget worse things, don't you? Pain, and even death? You'll think back on the days when you were slaving away to save money for college, and they'll strike you as comical, maybe even romantic."

"God forbid!" Walter laughed. And yet he had suddenly a shivery foretaste of a future beyond the one of which he day-dreamed as he worked.

When the siren screamed the end of their nine and a half hours Walter hurled his file and apron into his tool box and trotted down the aisle toward the time clock. Turning the corner of the body shop office just as its lights were extinguished, he ran headlong into the iron antennae of a fork truck and cried aloud with pain as the metal plate struck his shinbone. Tottering backwards, Water was suddenly gripped by the forearm and pulled erect. He turned gratefully and found himself staring into the eyes of Joe.

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Smarting with soreness and embarrassment, Walter demanded aggressively, "I suppose that's what you want me to remember!"

A faint stubble glinted along Joe's narrow cheeks. Greying like his iron hair, it aged him as it grew. He scraped his hand across it wearily and replied quietly, "Never mind the machinery. Remember the men. The men make the machines, and they make their own tragedies too. Once your own life gets easier, you'll take it for granted not only that theirs must be easier too, but that they deserve what they get anyway, that some law of natural selection has put you up where you are and them down where they are."

They had reached the clock bay where they took their place meekly in line, waiting to punch out, shuffling forward every few seconds while they spoke in low voices. Around them a swarm of men surged toward freedom—noisy boys with laughter to spare for the evening, haggard weary men in their forties, surly powerful black men in stained coveralls and scrawny brown men chattering in Spanish, vacant-faced fools with slack jaws and dangling hands, shrewd-eyed men fingering their union contract books, composing their campaign leaflets, and computing their chances of election to positions that would lift them out of the work routine.

"Why do they stay?"

"They're trapped, that's why. They say everybody's supposed to be, one way or another, but it's worse to be stuck here. Spending your life on the production line means counting out the minutes, being grateful that Mondays go fast because you're rested, and hating Tuesdays because the week is so long. It means that you're paying off forever on all the things you've been pressured into buying by getting up every day in order to do something you'd never, never think of doing if it was a matter of choice. It means never having anything to look forward to in all of your working life." Joe took his card from the rack, clicked it in the time clock, and with a wave of his hand was gone.

What was happening, as Walter woke daily to the dawn's dull alarm and went from the still house through the newly washed streets to the waiting assembly line, was that his self-pity, so strong

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that the page blurred before him when he lay in bed reading himself to sleep, was altering into a maturer concern with the fate of others who could not, like himself, set a term to their labor.

He began to question the men on the line with him, one after another, to find out how many of them felt as he did about what they were doing for a living. More sure of himself with every passing hour, he moved up and down the line, demanding, whenever there was a moment, an answer to his insistent question: "Do you think anybody likes coming in here to work?"

"Everybody does one day a week—payday," said the solder-flower.

"Not even the bosses," said the deck-fitter. "Do you think anybody with sense would knock himself out in this dirt and noise if it wasn't for the money?"

And the door-fitter said wryly, "Do you know what this kind of work is? It's colored man's work. Why, even the colored men are smartening up—they turn up their noses at it too, unless they get strapped."

Saddened and bewildered by this last comment, Walter turned away from the man who had made it, and who had punctuated his bitter remark with a series of thunderous blows on a door that he was fitting. Only Orrin, the second metal-finisher, grudgingly admitted that the work was a challenge to him, that the pay was fair, and that there were worse jobs. Behind them all, long-jawed Joe, caught up with his work as usual, stood casually beveling his screwdriver.

"I hear you've been taking a little poll," he said to Walter.

"What's it to you?" Walter asked truculently. He was in no mood to be mocked.

With apparent irrelevance, Joe replied by demanding, "How come you fixed on being an engineer?"

Walter was taken aback. "Why, that's where everybody says the future is."

"That's not reason enough for a fellow to struggle and sweat to get to college. Damn it, doesn't anybody go out and do what he wants to any more? I'm not saying you wouldn't make a good engineer, or that it wouldn't be fine for a change to have some engineers who care as much about people as they do about gadgets. But supposing you find out after you get to college that you want

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to spend your time learning something useless—are you going to leave yourself open for it?"

"Boy, you sure are free with advice."

Joe looked at him gravely. His long sad jaw had the hint of a smile. "The men on the line like you, Walter. They don't think you're just nosey when you ask questions. They think you're one of them, and in a good way you are. Maybe that's why I've got hopes for you."

Walter fought hard against the influence of the older man, whose crabbed and subversive outlook was so foreign to everything Walter had been taught, but he was forced to admit to himself that more and more he was seeing the factory through Joe's cold discerning eyes; and he began to fear that if Joe were ever to leave, the plant would have no real existence other than as a money-producing nightmare. Not only was there no one else really to talk to about it, but Joe had forced Walter to try to formulate his emerging ideas in an adult and comprehensible way.

"The worst thing about the assembly line is what it does to your self-respect," he said to Joe early one morning as they squatted on their haunches, waiting for the starting siren. "It's hard to keep from feeling like a fool when you know that everybody looks down on what you're doing, even the men who are doing it themselves."

Joe hung his hammer and metal spoon from the brass hook at his belt. "The big pitch has always been that we're a practical people, that we've proved to all the impractical European dreamers that production can serve people. But instead people are serving production. Look how frightened, how hysterical the bosses get when the line stops—they can't afford to figure what it costs *you* to keep it moving—they only know they've got a production quota. Of course when sales resistance starts building up and they put the cork back in themselves, they give you just the opposite story. Who can blame the poor slob in the middle for suspecting that the whole setup is really as nutty as a fruitcake, and for feeling ashamed of himself for being caught up in it?"

"All right," Walter challenged him. "Who's crazy? You, me, the guys around us, or the board of directors?"

"Anybody who gets suckered into believing that there's anything real behind the billboards they put up to get the show on the road, so that he commits himself to buying the billboard pictures

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by selling his life on the installment plan. I sympathize with any joker who begins to suspect that the whole world is against him, that he's the victim of a huge conspiracy organized to make his car fall apart before it's been paid off. Doesn't life in the factory seem to be deliberately designed to lower your own self-esteem? What happens when you're knocking down a dent? If you rap it too hard from the inside, you have to file it down that much more, and you hate yourself for it. If you don't rap it hard enough you only find out after it's moved on down the line, and then you have to hurry up and wallop it again. In either case you hate yourself instead of hating the car, or the invisible man that started up the line." He laughed briefly in anticipation of what he was about to add. "It's like the man that hits his thumb with a hammer while he's hanging a picture—only here he keeps hitting his thumb because they're moving the wall as fast as the union will let them. Who does he yell at every time that ball pean comes down on his nail? Himself."

"I wonder," Walter said slowly, "how many people actually feel that way."

"More than you can count. It's always safe to figure that if you feel something, the world must be full of people who feel the same way. Every sensible man realizes as he gets older that his feelings aren't unique. After all, that's the basis of the best art: the fact that you recognize yourself in it, and all those inner experiences that you'd thought no one else but you could know."

Walter was willing to recognize that he was not the only one to cringe when Buster called him back on a badly done job, to swear at himself for the mistakes that made him fall behind, to realize how he was being trapped into swearing at himself and deflecting his anger from what he did to the way he did it. But it was hard for him to believe that there were others who felt as intensely as he did, who beat their heads against the bars as he did, who dreamed of sunlight and freedom as he did, even though Joe tried to persuade him that the difference was often one of degree, or of his being able to express his feelings in a way that others couldn't. This was one of the questions that Walter was eager to argue with Joe, who moved from one extreme position to another, always mocking, always challenging him to learn what he stood for and to defend it like a man.

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"You know something," Walter burst out impetuously one day, "I don't know what I would have done here without you."

Instead of laughing, or belittling this praise, Joe's face darkened. The next morning he was not on the line.

By the third day of his absence Walter was beginning to feel as though it had all been a dream, as though he were slipping once again into the awful pit of loneliness, exhaustion and self-doubting despair. As a last resort he sought out the men on the line to learn what they thought of Joe.

"He's irresponsible," said Pop.

"He's the kind of guy that just don't care," said the younger inspector. "No wife, no kids, no wonder he can take off three days without worrying about getting a reprimand or getting fired."

"He knows his work," said Orrin grudgingly. "I don't know where he learned it, but he did. Just the same, he takes off. You can't *afford* to take off like that nowadays, not if you want to hold down a job."

On the fourth day he came back. He told no one where he had been. "Am I glad to see you!" Walter exclaimed—but Joe merely indicated, with a cold grin and a turn of his tattooed arm, that from time to time things came up that were more important than the making of automobiles. He did not set to work, but almost immediately was engaged in serious talk with Buster the foreman and with the union shop steward. The two were arguing vigorously, but suddenly Joe cut them off simply by lifting his hand. He said something very briefly, shoved his hands into his pockets, and the discussion was finished.

To Walter's amazement, he came back to the line, picked up his toolbox, and nodded casually to him.

"I just quit, Walter," he said. "Going to hit the road."

"But—"

"You'll make out all right, no matter what you do. I don't even have to wish you good luck."

Then he was off down the aisle, on his way to the tool crib and the plant police and the parking lot and God alone knew where after that, without so much as a handshake or an inclination of his lean frame. Suddenly Walter remembered something: "Hey!" he shouted. But Joe—if he heard him—did not turn around and soon was out of sight.

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You never told me about Pop, he wanted to tell Joe, you never answered all the questions I was going to ask you—but even if Joe had not gone for good, Walter would not have known how to say to him all the things that should have been said, the words of gratitude and self-confidence.

When the relief man came a few minutes later to give him a twelve-minute break, he hurried to the bathroom. There, just beyond the big circular sink that could accommodate half a dozen men, he could see out the tilted window to the vast parking lot.

The dull winter light was gloomy and deceptive, and so vague was the air that the dark ranks of massed automobiles were no more than darker blurs against the background of the grey steel fencing and the lowering sky. One of the cars moved, or was it his imagination? But no, the red tail-light dimmed, glowed, dimmed. Joe, the vanishing American, was swinging out of the lot and away from the production line, out of Walter's life and into someone else's, out of the present and into what lay beyond the gate. He was leaving the future to Walter, who now at last could wave his farewell, with his face pressed to the cool window as he watched the little light disappearing from view.

Then he washed the sweat from his face and returned to his work.

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JOSEPH BENNETT

Saxa Rubra

And a frog carved in greenest jasper
Jade or emerald
Within the sarcophagus
Devouring with his marble mouth
The scented white flesh of female saints
Within the Basilica of Constantine

And now in the Pope's Museum,
On the walls
The heads of Hadrian
Divine
Antinous
Divine
The earlier pagan saints
Crucifixion impalement
Iron hooks hot spikes
Kneeclamps and footclamps
The faith that would make them whole

I think, as the long aqueducts
Span the Campagna
And the hum of motorcars
Rubs against the pavement, the rubber, retreading, returning,
Old buildings shaken down by vibrations

And the rubber *thump* of advancing populations
The Europeans have discovered mass production
Advancement trade subsidies
And populations stuffed with pasta

The Old World learns

New hotels new tenants new ruins
Created, excavated, for the trade
The museums will be lighted

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There will be no entrance fees
Warm in winter
Cool in summer
And whole populations, shunning, avoiding them.
The roar of the motor
And the song of trade
The noise of Europe's last long surrender
To the child she made.
If the age of steam railways
Appalled you, if the inequities of the distribution
Of the fruits of industrial development,
The lifting of horsepower to the machine,
— The thought of coal mines depressed you,
Think of the new age where the power whizzes through the air
And the atom, circled in cool blue flame, cheerfully
And clearly goes about its duty —

Think — the terrain, with its empty hands,
Becomes a museum, is filled up,
Everywhere fences, and the catacombs
Give forth their dead.
By the cubic mile
We shall measure houses
And sewerage, and water and gas
Restrictions, and garden areas,
Play areas, and trees —
We shall be surrounded by garden-belts
And great museums, with classic facades, columns,
Will give up, like Washington, the ghost of the past
Like Pennsylvania Avenue in the dream of its marble facades,
Untrodden, untouched
Ignored by a bewildered people,
And all the heroic statuary, in parks —

Monuments shall become grants
Cancer conquest replace the bronze
The marble quarries closed, the population idle,
Healthy, inoculated, and restless.
With many babies,

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Swarming in the squares,
Claiming boredom, exhausted,
Waiting by empty temples,
While above in the Palaces,
Of Justice, of Administration,
Looking down from balcony windows
The rulers ponder diversions
And National Cathedrals rise like flies.

And in the Vatican, colossal deliberation,
Devise, from Bernini's windows,
Fountains and exhibits of fireworks,
Balloon ascensions, visits to planets,
Flying disks and the President's view of them.

The Age of Monuments is passed and this is the Age of Mirth
Rejoice, for the mousetrap has beaten a path to our doors
And it is enough to take the child out of his pen
To see the show
And our screens are cloudy with vision
And dim entertainments,
And dancers flicking their legs in an electronic dusk —
Color? Form? Line?
What are these abstractions?
When we have all color, all form, all line on our screens?
Patents protect us,
A mighty people grown torpid and inert in old age.

The fish incubated, the wild deer hatched,
The very hills numbered and the pine trees
Collected in forests, sanitary, for enforced rambles —
Custom removed, practice is all —
The endless runs of the scale with which we amuse
Our keyboard
Preparation for a virtuoso practice
Which has no audience
Beyond the endless mesh of the screen.
Antennae, wires, house throbbing unto house,
The answers creep across the waves,

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Invisible, radiated in the air from opencage towers
And quizzes exhaust our electricity
And panels our purposes —
— Cabinets deliberate, Presidents propose,
The upper chamber frowns —
The republics hang upon the gyre of a ballerina's net-black leg
The monarchies proceed to state openings
The musical show, the popular preacher, are consecrated by the Queen

Vacuum tubes
Echoing to each other
Till the dawn.

The radio music swells and amplified organs
In a swirl of electric pipes
Betoken the advancement of rulers to secular pulpits
As the processioned choristers advance across squared marble floors
And the Pope alone in his palace feels the wind of his new election,
Bernini's claws awaiting him,
And the white smoke of the paper ballots barely blown away
Ecco, Papa

The canonizations, beatifications
Reach further and further back into the centuries
The President plays golf.
The Queen has athlete's foot.
Surgeons prescribe a cure for nervousness —
The ulcered stomachs heal, and fattened with milk,
Hearts beat stouter through richened bloodstreams,
Hardening of the arteries is the last frontier,
Wrenching loose the claws of the Crab,
The great Bite of childbirth assuaged

The insane, too, have drugs and are cured
And miraculous returns are announced, daily, to civilization.
Reclaimed citizens, rejoice, the screens await you,
And these heads, too, bow to the electronic dusk.
Dust thou art

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Now the priests raise their red robes
Above the Chancel, in National Cathedrals,
And we await news of the next world.

Across the plateau of the laying on of hands
Preachers have 50,000 congregations
Radio brings salvation to the poor in heart
The humble receive the sacraments
As if paralyzed by tablets of light
And the ecstatic convulsion of their bodies
Brings the fever in Santa Teresa's night
From Avila's high cincture of walls
The saint's body exhaled perfume from her tomb
A smooth fair breast was left for the King of Spain
Louis XIII, and his Cardinal; Anne of Austria,
Two sons
Feverish for the succession

Democratic business suits

And the Pope cold on his seat —
Had they only kept to golf and the musicals,
Would God come to the world now?
God in a bottle, God in a sieve,
And the people are on the march again —

What new gospels
Shall profit a man
If he gain the whole world?
The elaborate burial customs and ceremonies
Began about this time
And you can see, digging down the strata,
How, in the ruins of the Vatican, where the stadium now stands,
The last pope was murdered

Mitre, crozier, cross and robe,
Buried with him,
He was heard only locally.

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Rome, Rome, three thousand years,
And the microphone blared

The Era of Good Feeling began about this time,
About the time of the conversion of the Russians,
And the later sediments show,
The Greek rite declined, the Roman rite,
God and the West, united with the East,
Began the Era of Evangelism
And this Book blared forth over the ruins

The Era of Entertainment
There is no sediment for this.

We were here,
And we continue to be here.

The Power of Caesar is in a New Relationship

Claustral officialdom
Reveals in offices
Revelry of the claustral statistic.

Revealed revelry is not for long,
Gathering of the scampered numbers —
And all the machines click, toothless,
For the long appetite that bites them,
And for relief of that appetite.

Behind these glass walls, glass and steel,
The active transistor, the vigorous rectifiers, transducers,
Capacitors —
Relief of that appetite;
And how it hums.

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The scent of ozone hangs over officialdom
From all the machinery within,
And the steel cabinets, glossy.
Power in small voltages flickers
And fluctuates over these faces,
And the faced machines fluctuate
And the needles grow and wax and wane
And decline
As the current fluctuates
And the statistics vary, in their infinite effervescence.

It is as if a life were unfolding in these cabinets
And the thousand tiny machines
Were all repeating variations, in their small voltages,
And the variations were one: a life,
Leaping across circuits, across controlled gaps,
As the life of a great dodecennial census,
With all the people inscribed on rolls,
As in Bethlehem, or Galilee,
And Caesar called for the statistic,
Augustus, and the rolls, inscribed on wax stylus,
Were handed him, embossed with the Imperial Seal,
And beneath the eagles he read,
Unwilling, the numbers of his peoples,
The legions
And here the official revelry had settled into the small space
Of an imperial hand —

Now in the fifth day of that month
The decree went out
And was read in Bethlehem of Judaea, in Galilee
That all were to be recorded on the tax census,
And lo, they went up, each with his wife and his children,
and his ass and oxen,
Each to his native village to be recorded,
Where Caesar sat in the person of the praetor
Or the centurion —

And leaping across the dials
These peoples made such scurrying

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With their breeding and animals and repopulation of
the earth
Their plowing and industry,
A symphony of fact
Which could be read only on steel wheels and when the music
was played
To the ears of the discriminating emperor
He was appalled at the discord and the discredences
For by this time, Caesar was Hadrian,
And that symphony of frozen flame, his marbles,
Leaped about him wild, ecstatic, and controlled
Forced into a sculptor's form,
But here was chaos within a disc.
It slipped from his hand
And the music stopped.
And all the peoples leaped infinitely away
Into a receding dusk peopled with small electrical charges.
It faded, in a mist of blue sparks.

Caesar alone is left,
And the villa is vast.
The lover is gone, dead, drowned, of its own volition,
And the statues, multifarious, remain.
The marble has stopped. The water has stopped.
Slaves, servants, removed to their quarters
The palace is vast,
The view small, barely enough to reach a few hills, a
poor valley,
So that Rome cannot be seen over the horizon

The Horizon is so great and the Dome is so vast,
It cannot be seen where Caesar walks alone and the air
turns chill
In the foothills of the Apennines.
It is night.

Great Caesar,
Monstrosity of our own and his own dream,
In all the glory that made him a God,

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And his statues throughout the Empire,
Vulgarian of the excessive soul,

There is a diminishment in the endless offices
By the Tiber,
Where the vast administrative quarters run endlessly
And the world is ruled
For a small tribute.
See, on this head of the coin, is Caesar's!
See, his head, his crown, all laurel;
And this side is God's, and he is a God.
The metal true, the taxation adequate,
What more do you require?
We are governed well.

The spiritual diminishment of the large machines
Which have so greatly simplified our administrative tasks
Is an excessive thing;
An excessive phenomenon, as big as the Age.
And the clerical staffs have more time
For leisure and self-improvement.
Their tasks are lighter.
There are motor scooters in the Capitol.
Oh, the Dome is surrounded with joy.

Populations rejoice at clerical efficiency
And reductions in working hours
And the Dome is floodlit.

Caesar walks in frozen marble as his peoples rejoice —
No time for the golf game, ennui in the yacht,
Dead birds have no charm.

What is there for the ruler but Architecture?
What other pastime?
Should he collect stamps?
The lovers kill themselves.
They are unworthy.

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Nothing is unbecoming because nothing is worthy
And nothing is done —
Neither sadism, perversions, bestials —
A few art collections —
But mainly the frozen terror of stone,
Those marbles about his head.

O pity Caesar,
You who come to mock him,
Or to urinate, perhaps, on the front of his palace —
He needs not your yellow stains.

This is the man whom the age has undone.
He needs not the satisfactions of the people nor do they
console him.
He gives back the taxes.
The lovers die.
He does not send for new ones.
On him is the weight and the crime of the people
And he does not shudder beneath the burden
Neither does he smile nor enjoy
Nor is there glory —
Glory!
Lost in that faint fire of his marbles
The frettings and archings
As he builds colossal, useless monuments —
The palace itself is too big.

Glory sits on his face like a bug
And Pleasure beneath his feet,
A conquered slave,
There is Nothing,
Nor love nor hate,
Nor children of his loins,
He is alone, and Caesar.

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Of Poetry

Like paint the sunset fills the doors
And panels give on perspectives.
Perspicacious visitors scan the floors
For homes of the great hives.

Drones surround the White Queen on her throne
It is the end! It is the end! a long day crying.
Return, return, cry the radar in their domes.
Revolve, revolve, in spherical sighing.

It is this atmosphere filled with rays and forces
Deceives us; it is the bladder-like motion of wind signals.
Come back, come back, the age divorces;
We live, and die, surrounded in tunnels, windmills.

On the dykes of Holland we set up windmills
And by the great pumps set up signals.
The land reverts to dried-out black peat.
Dries, like a sponge, and leaves our rivers stranded.

Rivers higher than the plain, passing in canals,
High-banked estuaries, draining our marshes;
We have reclaimed the Pontine from the tsetse and anopheles,
And the domes strut, a mass of rays.

The rays are down, there is a tangle of beams
Playing over the wreckage of the airdrome,
And the blackest stars.
Man alone in primordial night

Discovers what it is he reaches.
Meanwhile the sun like paint descends
And all the difficult metaphors surround you.
Playing out at the center as in great spokes.

Hub of the painted night and the decayed airdrome,
There are countless metaphors.

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Who paints the universe paints with words,
Reservoirs of incommunicable reserve.

Toss them in the air, brilliant cartwheels, substitute suns,
Planetary suspensions, in great distant systems,
And infinite reflections among these small discs
Suspended in space.

Images we only give of reality
And the dust suspended there.
See, there is a trembling
As the beam strikes the motes

And the sun is like paint.

Landscape

Long after the dawn the thatched hills,
Drying in the sun, gave up their tightened essences.
The thickets rose and stiffened,
The underbrush, the twigs rose leafless
In the glare; terrain golden, thatched
And brittle with its stalks;
Bitter with the scent of drying pastes;
Shriveled with the grains
Of gilt manure.

And steelhead salmon, flopping beneath the azure,
Scattering the dust of dried-out rivers;
Fins throbbing in the finely-silted beds.

Overhead, around the saucer of the hills,
Above the smoke that rises from small flames,
The mallard with extended necks,
The craning eyes of birds.
And the homing cry, points shifting,
Black, above horizons, in patterns of their flight.

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In these dried-out marshes in this
Amphitheatre of the hills,
The calls of beasts —
The hissing of the salmon, the desiccated
Flesh of hares.
Birds rasping in thickets,
Small mouths grating in the leaves.

The stiff twig-work filters the light.

The soft sky a maze of essences,
Of funneled sources, blending with the smoke.

Thorns twisted, crackling,
Matted as they dry;
Stiff fingers of twig-work
Rising from the earthen core.
And dripping metal, intricately running with the melted bronze.

Dogs move on the forest-floor,
Retrieving bodies of the dried-up game.

A note too deep for sound,
Hangs lifted in the air,
Puncturing the lapis.
The cold high sun —

Leaves drift across arcades

Punctures the azure —
Throbbing toward the belt of stone
Flecks of metal, tumors in the rock
Draining downward to the earthen core,
To polar mountains
Draining downward to the copper core.

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Patristic

When the reed pipes blow in chalumeau
A syrinx beats beyond the porch.
Chalcedonian doctrines flutter here
Where woodwinds echo Porphyry.

Larvae and pupae of chalcid flies
Fix their mouths on living hosts.
Membranes rise from the veinless wings,
The fruiting and spore-bearing parts.

Basilicas are windowless
Upon the table-lands of slime.
Beneath the Lake of Moeris
The bees have carved the loaves and wine.

Hamitic uncials compose the script
Of Coptic disciplines beyond our strength.
The Fayum keeps its liturgies —
The desert churches fill with sand.

Apostolic delegates
Convey succession with the flute.
The synods meet in beehive huts
Devouring chalices of fruit.

The Red Monastery guards
The passes toward the west.
The cenobites within the fort
Apocalyptically confess.

The chariots of wind
Blow up beyond the Libyan cliffs.
A tongue leaps up from fort to fort,
A flame devours the particles of sand.

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THOMAS C. TURNER

Something to Explain

GILBERT HORTON'S first week-end holiday since Easter began on a warm morning in early October. At nine o'clock Gil parked his Ford on a shady Georgetown street and walked through the dry hazy air toward a white-brick house with green shutters and a boxwood hedge.

Gil was a tall broad-shouldered man of thirty. Thick black hair and the prominent bones of his face made him look gaunt, and fatigue gave him a forbidding expression which went with an older man.

He walked to the first door inside and knocked. No one answered, so he pushed the door open and called: "Dolly Maxwell!" The bedroom door was ajar, and beyond it a door latch clicked, and he heard water splashing. "I overslept, Gil. I'm taking a shower. I'll be ready in ten minutes."

"I'll bet," he called back good-humoredly. He had allowed four and a half hours to get to the game, including an hour for lunch. Relax, he told himself, it makes no difference whether we're late or not. He envied Dolly the ability to oversleep.

Though he was tired from long overwork, the tension he felt was pleasant. He felt some satisfaction that he had finished one job and was going on to a bigger one. Two years before he had been made chief of a branch which had been a small world of cliques and jargon, of duplicating functions and meaningless statistics about work produced which was filed but should have been thrown away—much of which in fact should never have been done in the first place—and Gil had reorganized it, cut the force of thirty-six by six, thus saving the taxpayer twenty-one thousand dollars a year in salaries. It had taken a long while because none of these surplus employees could be fired, no matter how incompetent, but had to be eliminated in the normal turnover of personnel.

Now he was going to X Division, so supersecret that most people in the agency did not know who was in it, what it did, or where its offices were. Gil had never communicated directly with X Divi-

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sion; even its agency mail was relayed from another mail drop. Monday morning he would go to an unspecified job at a considerable increase in pay. He would be notified at his old office where to report.

He paced about the living room. Dolly and her roommate had redecorated their apartment, papered the walls and painted the woodwork and made curtains and slipcovers, all in yellows and greens. He opened the glass doors to a small patio, and autumn smells of sweet decay came from the maple leaves which littered the yard.

He glanced at his watch again. I'd better forget the office, I need the rest, he thought, but he dialed the agency number and gave the switchboard his extension. "Alice, this is Gil Horton, are there any messages for me?"

"Yes, Mr. Horton. Mr. Kronjager wants to see you. Says it's important. Mr. Horton, I know this is your only time off in months, and if you say so, I haven't talked with you—"

"Thanks, Alice, I'd better call him." Puzzled, feeling vaguely that something had gone wrong, he called Kronjager's extension. Gil had never seen Kronjager but had received his directives on security. Kronjager was security chief—the deus ex machina who had the job of settling problems of human fallibility in advance.

"This is extension 6615." The voice had such an odd remote quality that at first Gil thought he had an automatic answering device with a recorded message. He could not even decide on the sex of the speaker. Gil gave his name, and the voice said: "Mr. Kronjager asks that you come to 20 V Building as soon as you can. He'll be in all day."

"I'll be there in fifteen minutes." Puzzled and somewhat irritated, Gil hung up and called to Dolly: "I have to go to the office for a while. I imagine I'll be back by ten."

"Don't let them trap you or anything!"

It was unnaturally easy to park this Saturday, and Gil was at Kronjager's door fifteen minutes later. The strange telephone voice belonged to a woman over six feet tall of indeterminate age with straight black hair pulled back over her ears. "Mr. Horton, will you please go in."

The inner office was large and bare without the rug the security chief undoubtedly rated. Beyond a grey metal desk, the light behind him, sat Kronjager. His eyebrows and blond hair were the

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color of zinc, and his skin had the tight stretched look of plastic surgery. Like his secretary he seemed curiously ageless. "Mr. Horton, please sit down."

Gil sat, aware of the acceleration of his heartbeat, and he wondered what to expect, perhaps another lecture on the supersecrecy of X Division, but he sensed it was something more.

Kronjager was staring at a pamphlet of legal-sized yellow paper. After a minute or so, he looked up and said: "Mr. Horton, this concerns a further security investigation which was necessary because of your new post. Of course you've been through some of this before." He tapped the paper on his desk. "When you came on duty, you filled out an application and took the polygraph and were subjected to a routine security check." He paused and opened up the yellow sheets, and Gil felt the stroke of his heart increase again and his face grow hot. That form contained a lot of personal questions and frank answers, though for the moment Gil couldn't recall what any of them were.

"You remember this." Kronjager's colorless voice ground on without emphasis or emotion. "You were asked about how much alcohol you consume, any arrests or convictions other than minor traffic offenses. Also, the question: 'Is there anything you would like to explain?' The agency cannot take a chance on its employees' being exposed to blackmail. Therefore we hire no one with a history of homosexuality or other sexual perversion, and for the same reason no one with close relatives beyond the Iron Curtain. Our requirements are stringent for everyone in the agency—even a janitor. We expect much more from someone in X Division." He paused and looked directly at Gil. "Something has come to light about you in this new security check."

Gil stiffened. "What's that?" he asked hoarsely. Relax, he told himself, you're acting like a man in a dentist's chair—like a man with something to hide.

Kronjager's attention seemed to sound him out like a stethoscope. "I'm not permitted to say now, but you have been in administrative positions and have a broad enough view of the needs of the agency to know what kind of thing we're trying to find out." Kronjager's manner was dry and humorless, not bored, but as though everything in the universe had exactly the same interest for him.

He held out the yellow pages, and Gil snatched them up. It was a blank of the form he had filled in years ago. He lowered it slowly.

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"Mr. Kronjager, I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about."

"I want you to think about it," said Kronjager, "today and tomorrow."

Gil slapped the paper against his knee. "Is this like the polygraph?"

"In what way?"

"I understand you people don't believe it can detect lies, you just use it to loosen up the applicant and make him spill his guts. If this is some kind of test—" Gil paused, realizing his voice was excited and hostile, and his choice of words offensive.

"No, Mr. Horton, this is not a test." Kronjager's expression was frighteningly serious.

"Well, just tell me what you think you have on me, and I'll tell you if it's so or not."

"We believe we could have more confidence in you if you told us voluntarily."

Gil made a futile exasperated gesture. "But what *kind* of thing is it?"

"Something which could possibly expose you to blackmail."

They sat facing each other in the quiet room. Gil slowly got up. "Is that all?"

"Yes. Will you come here before you go to your new office Monday morning?"

Gil hardly saw the secretary as he went out. He no longer felt angry but had an icy feeling like stage fright. The hallways were deserted except for the uniformed guard, and Gil showed his identity card and went outside.

He paused in the hazy sunlight and found his usually orderly mind in confusion. Maybe it was a poison-pen letter. He could not think of anyone who would write one. The thought kept coming back that Kronjager had made a mistake and had the wrong man. In the sunlight the interview quickly seemed unreal and dreamlike.

Walking to his car Gil searched his memory. By temperament he avoided publicity, but the few things he would actually exert himself to hide were ridiculous and embarrassing, certainly not illegal. Kronjager of course had him at a disadvantage, which was what he intended. If this was a test, he certainly had not responded well to it. It seemed more like an attack with a homing missile which far

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beyond the knowledge of the launcher would inexorably track its target.

I ought to call off the trip and spend the week-end getting this thing straightened out, he thought as he got behind the wheel of his car. I'll talk with Dolly first.

He was a habitual list-maker, a clean-desk man, and he mentally listed his possible sins. One concerned his brilliant radical college roommate, Paul Machen. He had not seen or heard of Machen in seven years, but he had no trouble picturing his alert boyish face. Despite their clashing views on politics, Gil had been curious enough to go with Machen to a Communist party rally in New York and had been bruised by a piece of scrap iron thrown by a heckler. So far as he knew, no one had recognized or photographed him, no one but Machen knew he had gone. When he took the job with the agency, Gil had considered telling his recruiting officer about this, but the man seemed too dense and indifferent to see it his way, and Gil had not mentioned it. He had also hated to get Machen's name into their records.

If Machen had in the seven years since become a Communist or possibly an agent and Kronjager knew it, he would rightly take a dim view of an old friend sympathetic enough to go with Machen to a Communist rally. He might even justifiably suspect a very deep plot by which Gil was planted in the agency, not to be used until he had risen high enough to be effective.

Yet a story which Gil had once told on himself to his college clubmates seemed more likely. He had in his cups told them of an entirely fictitious seduction of a thirteen-year-old girl and the subsequent abortion which he had either financed or performed, he couldn't remember which. He had waked the following morning with an anguished moral hangover and tried as casually as he could to persuade those in his audience that it was a joke—a joke which had no comic intent and had excited no laughter and which he had unfortunately invested with such detail and color that he couldn't be sure that all his denials had shaken anyone's belief in it.

As he recalled the incident, Gil felt his face grow hot. That was ten years ago. How should he explain that? The yellow application blank allowed four lines for explanations. A psychiatrist would take hours to explain why the usually retiring Gilbert Horton should tell a story on himself which made him appear a criminal before people whose respect he was uncommonly anxious to keep.

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Gil was surprised to find that he was already at the curb before Dolly's apartment. He had been so preoccupied he couldn't even recall having his identity card checked or the route from Kronjager's office. Dolly met him at the door. He received her in his arms, and kissed her, yet his heart was not in it, and he was unpleasantly aware of the softness of her mouth and the cotton candy taste of her lipstick. He frowned and wiped his mouth with his handkerchief.

"What's the matter?" she said, wide-eyed. "Is it your work or anything?"

He realized with some surprise that even if security regulations had permitted it, he could not discuss this with her. He had tried to keep their relationship respectable and uncomplicated, and this trouble, even if he were innocent, put him in a shameful light. "Classified stuff," he said. "Just a little complication on the job."

At that moment it struck him that he had been dwelling on matters in which he was actually innocent, and resisting any recollection of Grace and the one incident which excited really painful feelings of guilt.

"Gilbert Horton, you haven't heard a word I've said or *anything!*" Dolly laughed and put her arms around him. "I just said, 'Don't you think this is the best time to go back for a college week-end?' When I was sixteen, I went with Daddy to a reunion of his one June. I had the feeling the campus was sort of bracing itself for the alumni. And so many of the class got drunk."

"I'm sure they did." Gil saw her clearly for the first time that morning. She was dressed to compromise with lunch, football game, cocktails, and dinner—a dark blue skirt and jacket, plain black shoes, no hat—and even fully clad her excellent figure was impressive in its health and sturdiness. She had been a swimming champion in her teens and looked it. Now at twenty-four she held an "interesting" job as a researcher for a newsmagazine. Her suntan was so dark it made her eyes a little too light and almost expressionless. Her reddish blond hair was beautiful, the color of Mars. She disliked her real name, Dolores, and it did not fit her.

Seeing her eagerness about the week-end he decided he could not disappoint her. More than that, this week-end he would see old friends at parties and have a good chance to check on his own past. Dolly was to spend the night with friends in New York, and

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Gil would stay at a hotel, for he disliked staying overnight with friends.

"Let's go," he said. "We'll be late." He picked up her overnight bag, and noticed again her fine figure as they walked to the car, yet the mellow sexual pleasure he usually felt in her presence was lacking.

The crowded highway increased his tension. He drove automatically, and Dolly chattered about the parties they were invited to and related a long rambling dream she had had the previous night. While she talked, his mind was ranging far. What he must check this week-end was the likelihood of any of these three episodes getting to Kronjager.

Memory of Grace made him grip the steering wheel tightly. She had taken on a peculiar coloring in his memory. If evil luck had not ruined their affair, she would have been something of a white goddess to him, and perhaps she was still an obstacle to his finding another woman irresistible. Remembering her always put him in an unwelcome mood of nostalgia.

Grace was four years older than he, and though her husband had been in his late thirties, she had hardly been for him an "older woman". He had seen her often at parties in New York and found her witty and attractive. She was tall and straight and thin, a brunette with yellow-green eyes, and for a long time she had seemed unattainable. She had an appealing air of melancholy—wounded, it seemed, by that unfaithful husband whom Gil had never seen.

That March six and a half years ago the affair had been going since Christmas. He and Grace had arranged to borrow a beach cottage on the Virginia coast from a broad-minded friend of Grace's. Brake repairs on Grace's new Lincoln delayed them for nearly eight hours. Afterward he had retraced each step and called this delay the seed of trouble. They were both tense when she picked him up at Grand Central. It was twilight, and a misty rain was falling. "How do you feel?" he asked her, as she slid over and he took the wheel.

"Very self-conscious. Nothing I had seemed right to wear, and certainly I couldn't wear anything new." She wore a dark suit and no jewelry. "I really feel terribly nervous."

"Do you want to call it off?"

"Oh, no, I'm sure of that."

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Around eight o'clock they talked about dinner more from thirst than hunger. She knew a quiet Pennsylvania Dutch restaurant near the highway. He drove into the dark parking lot behind it, and they stayed for ten minutes in each others' arms before they went inside feeling breathless and uneasy.

The place was dark and rustic, a bar on one side and a restaurant on the other. A log fire burned in a fireplace, and a costumed waitress brought them cocktails. The fire of the gin in his empty stomach made everything seem right for the first time that day. They ordered dinner and another round of drinks. Grace seemed sad and supernaturally beautiful by candlelight, and he felt infatuated with the restaurant, the time of day, and unwillingly he was falling in love. He had decided in the enchanted air of that hour to marry her.

He took her hand under the table and was surprised to find the palm slick with perspiration. "I'm sorry," she said, "I guess I'm still pretty nervous—excited anyway."

Neither could eat much of the meal ordered for them. With it they drank a white wine which they agreed had an aftertaste faintly like aspirin. They finished with black coffee. He felt heavy and his face hot, his eyes tired. "You know the wise thing would be not to try to drive all the way tonight."

"It's past nine," she said. "And you look tired. We won't get there before two."

On a hill behind the restaurant and in the same rustic style was the Roadside Rest Motel with a "Vacancy" sign in red neon. Gil had felt some premonition when he saw the manager, but he attributed it to the instant dislike he felt for the man. A bronze slab on the desk identified him as "Mr. Harrigan". He was wide and burly with powerful arms and a big stomach suggestive of the athlete gone to seed. His face had that combination of sadism and righteousness which Gil had seen in more than one small-town sheriff. Gil signed the registry card "Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Horton" and took pleasure in the lie as a prophecy. Grace waited in the car.

From the hill they saw the reflection of lights bobbing in water, and Grace remarked on how it seemed like boarding a ship. The room had a ship-like smell of new varnish. Quickly he turned out the lights and took her in his arms.

It must have been two hours later when they heard the crunching

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of footsteps on the gravel outside. Grace sat up suddenly and whispered: "Is the car locked?"

"I think so. I'm sure the trunk's locked," he murmured drowsily. "Nothing in front to steal."

The footsteps stopped outside, and he sat up. The room was dark except for the faint light under the blinds. The bedclothes slipped off his bare shoulders and chest.

"There's someone right outside the door," she said, and listened breathlessly.

"I think they've gone on," he said. But his heart was beating violently, and he had a choked feeling in his throat. By the light under the blinds he looked at his watch. "Eleven-thirty." He heard footsteps of someone walking softly on the gravel.

"Someone's fooling with the car," he said. He quickly pictured the circumstances of the car's being stolen. How could they report the theft to the police or the insurance company? He put on his bathrobe and opened the door.

Harrigan sat on the fender of the car. He had a flashlight in one hand, and as Gil appeared, he put a pencil behind his ear and stuck a card in his pocket. A neon sign illuminated his coarse triumphant face.

"What do you want?" Gil said hoarsely.

Harrigan slid off the fender. "Buddy," he said slowly, "you and that woman are in violation of the laws and statutes of this state. You're in trouble."

"You're wrong," said Gil. "Look here, what do you mean—" Harrigan turned and walked quickly toward the office. "Wait a minute," Gil called after him, but the other did not look around. Gil came back inside, closed the door, and turned on the light.

"Please turn out the light," Grace whispered. She was sitting up in bed, holding the cover up to her chin, and her eyes were wide with fright. Gil did not turn the light out but quickly put on his trousers and shoes.

"How did he know?" she said.

"Must have seen the registration certificate on the steering column. But mainly he must have sensed we weren't married. I should have thought of that. I was in too much of a hurry."

"Let's go, Gil!"

"Calm down, I'm going to try to talk him out of it."

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"No," she said. She was already partly dressed. "You can't convince him without arguing, and he'll know you wouldn't bother if he weren't right. Give him some money, and let's go." She took some bills from her pocketbook and held them out to him.

"Let me handle this," he said brusquely. "He's not in the business to enforce adultery statutes. I can talk him out of it."

He walked to the office. Harrigan greeted him with an expression of outrage. "Look here, you," Gil snapped. "You've upset my wife, and if you don't apologize to her now, I'm going to write some letters and have you blacklisted by every travel association in America. The car we're using is my sister-in-law's. You had no business going into it. You come with me now, or take the consequences."

Harrigan got up slowly, frowning. "Wait a minute, mister." He spoke slowly, evidently trying to decide whether Gil was bluffing. "Don't get mad. So I made a mistake. I'm just trying to keep this place decent for folks like you. I'll come and apologize to the lady, but you know how it is in this business—"

"No, don't bother," said Gil, "but don't think we or any of our friends will ever be back."

He turned and strode away. The wind was cold outside, and he folded his arms and hunched his shoulders. We're in luck, he thought, he didn't ask to see any of her personal identification. He had convinced the man by sheer heat, for his indignation had been real enough. But before he reached the door he was bitten by the thought that the man was just playing it safe. The average innkeeper in such a situation, Gil knew, would let the matter drop there, but he had seen an expression of hatred in Harrigan's small eyes. He might call the local sheriff, or as soon as his slow brain had carried him that far, he might even call Grace's husband. Just a routine check, a man and woman say they've borrowed Mrs. Whitelaw's car.

The room door was locked, and during the minute he waited before she opened it, he checked the car. It was locked. Evidently Harrigan had read the certificate by shining his flashlight through a window. Previously he must have seen the insolvent law student in Gil's threadbare suit and reasoned that the car was not his but belonged to the expensive-looking woman with him. Gil wondered if Grace had meant this disparity in dress when she said she hadn't known what to wear. When she opened the door, she was dressed

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all but her shoes, and she seemed small and child-like in her stockinged feet. She had a hairbrush in one hand, and she looked scared and hollow-eyed. "I was in the bathroom," she explained, seeing his angry face. "What happened?"

"I bullied him and made him back down. He apologized."

"Let's go."

"There's no need to go now."

She seemed about to cry. "Gil, he may call the police! Do you think I'll get any sleep here tonight?"

"Do you think he cares whether we—" But before he finished the sentence, he realized she had a point. His overbearing defense had given Harrigan good reason to hate him. Harrigan could have the sheriff come over and question them in the morning and ask to see Grace's identification on the grounds that they were driving someone else's car.

Now as he drove on the highway six years later, his eyes hardly focussing on the sunlit traffic, Gil could still remember the guilt and fear vividly which had made them feel they had to go.

"Look out!" screamed Dolly. The windshield filled with the back end of a big truck, and Gil threw his weight on the brake. The tires screeched, and Dolly hit the windshield.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I know it hurt. Let me see."

"Just a bump," she said, squinting and rubbing her forehead. "I'm all right. That truck stopped so suddenly! You were a million miles away, weren't you?"

"I'm afraid I was." His hands trembled, and his face was wet with sweat. "Somebody must have stopped in the line up ahead."

Traffic resumed, and Dolly began talking again with nervous gaiety. He tried to respond while shadowy forms passed through his mind—the faceless enemy who would write a poison-pen letter, the thirteen-year-old girl and the phantom abortionist, and the evil commissar that Paul Machen had become.

They stopped at a roadside restaurant for lunch, and when they left, the game was well into the first quarter, and they had a long way still to drive. His mood was having more effect on Dolly, and she sat silently listening to the radio broadcast of the game.

He found the university town deserted and unusually sad for a mellow fall afternoon, even with the bursts of cheering and band music audible several blocks from the stadium. "The club's on the the way," said Gil. "I've got to make a telephone call from there."

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"But we'll miss the end of the game!" she said.

"I'll make it quick." Dolly waited in the front room of the club while Gil got change from the major-domo and telephoned. He found the name Whitelaw, Donald D., in a Manhattan telephone directory and called Mrs. Whitelaw person-to-person. A woman, evidently a maid, answered and said Mrs. Whitelaw was expected in a few minutes. Gil then called Paul Machen at his parents' home in Schenectady. The operator was given a number in New York City which she rang, and with a feeling of unreality Gil heard the voice of Paul Machen. "Paul, this is Gil Horton."

"Well, long time no see, as Cardinal Mindszenty used to say. Seven years. What are you doing, Gil?"

"Counting paper clips down in Washington. Look, Paul, could I see you sometime today?"

"Sorry, Gil, I'm on my way to Boston in about twenty minutes. Washington, eh? Sounds like something hush-hush. Not the F.B.I.?"

"No." Whatever he got out of Machen, he would have to get now, and he didn't know how to ask. "What are you doing, Paul?"

"Working with a professor on a book. Not collaborating—ghosting."

"What book?"

"I believe you *are* working for the F.B.I."

"No, the shoe's on the other foot. Be frank with me, Paul. Could I put you down for a character reference?"

"Oh, I see, the heat's on. Don't be cryptic, Gil, it's much more stimulating to a wiretapper. No, not if you love Big Brother and you want Big Brother to love you Gil, I've got to run. See you sometime. Goodbye."

Gil hung up and sat there, his shirt soaked with sweat. Paul didn't sound devious enough for a Communist agent, but he reflected sadly, the world had certainly come between them. It occurred to him that his own collegiate idealism,—his eagerness to learn, his easy undergraduate tolerance, even his love of humanity—had gotten lost. He had been too busy for years to think about anything but the work under his nose. At least from the sound of it Paul was still following his personal chimera. Of course calling Machen had made no sense; he could hardly have been in a position to tell Gil anything.

Dolly was pacing nervously, and when he rejoined her, she actually looked relieved that he had not skipped out on her. They

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were half-way across the lawn when a crowd of people appeared in the opening in the hedge and brought with them a loud medley of voices. They were undergraduates, college girls, alumni and their wives. Dolly said in dismay: "The game's over."

Victory, Gil decided from their faces. I could use a victory today, but actually what I need is a drink. The crowd swarmed around them and up into the club. He looked at the vaguely familiar prosperous faces, and felt isolated as the one unlucky man among a lot of lucky ones, and for the first time he disliked his fellow alumni. He felt conspicuous in a way which reminded him of his teens, for his height and the grim cut of his face and his big Adam's apple.

He turned to Dolly. "Let's walk on over to Rog Gaines' house. He's expecting us right after the game."

As they walked, she said, giving him a worried glance: "Are you mad at me or anything, Gil?"

"Of course not."

"Gil, if there's something I've done, or something somebody has told you about me or anything like that, please tell me."

"It's just the job, Dolly. I'm sorry." He felt he owed her more of an explanation than that, but he only added: "Your forehead's a little discolored by that bump. I'm sorry about that too."

Professor Rog Gaines and his wife greeted them at the door. A dozen people, mostly faculty, were already there, and after Gil and Dolly had been introduced and given drinks, Dolly went off to powder her nose. Gil had just drained his first Martini when Gaines said: "Look who's here, Gil. Jolly Ollie Warren from your neck of the woods."

Oliver Warren was grave, thin, and reserved. He and Gil had been clubmates and good friends. They shook hands warmly, and Gil said: "You're in Washington, Oliver? What doing?"

"Just a boondoggle with the Commerce Department. How about you?"

"I'm with State." This was the standard reply to satisfy the questioner and cover the real agency. Gil asked about Warren's family—he had a wife and two children visiting his mother-in-law in Chicago. After that Gil thought: I've got to take this opportunity before Dolly comes back, yet Gil had always wanted Warren's respect and hated to remind him of this incident. Warren was in fact one of the last of his clubmates Gil would have chosen to ask about

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this, but he was here. "Ollie, there's something that's been bothering me. Seems kind of silly now. I've often wondered since college whether you'd remember. Seems I spun a yarn years ago when I was high about a mess I'd gotten into. Completely fictitious, and I wonder if you'd remember—"

Roger Gaines approached and rattled the contents of a silver shaker, and Gil extended his glass for another Martini. The drink he had just finished was taking effect in an anaesthetic but not particularly pleasant way. Warren had not been drinking, just standing with a glass in his hand. He said nothing but looked expectantly at Gil.

"Do you remember the story I mean, Ollie?"

"About little Annie May who got in a family way? Sweet thirteen. How could I forget it? You always told that story on yourself when you'd had a lot to drink, Gil."

"I told it more than once?"

Warren nodded. He turned and set his untouched drink down on a table.

"How seriously do you think everyone took it?"

Warren's laugh had a note of constraint. "Well, I can't answer for the others, but I didn't think it was necessarily the key to your whole personality."

"Then you think some of the others could have taken it seriously?"

Warren shrugged. I'm talking shop and I should shut up, now, Gil said to himself, this is as bad as trying to sell insurance or bonds at reunions, but anxiety was nagging him. "Look, Ollie," he said hurriedly, "you work for the government too, and you know what a fuss they make about security. I'm not supposed to say this, but—"

He stopped, for a peculiar change had come over Oliver Warren's face, a look of warning so emphatic it was almost like a film over his eyes, and Gil felt an abyss open before him. Warren was of course not what he said he was; the expression which silenced Gil could mean nothing else. Gil had heard of a Mr. Warren in Kronjager's division, whom Gil had never seen. Not necessarily the same man, but—What's the matter with me, thought Gil, am I getting softheaded? For all I know Oliver Warren is a security agent assigned to the case of Gilbert Horton.

"I wouldn't worry about collegiate antics," said Warren with a thin smile. "Live in the present."

They turned as Dolly approached. "Dolly, this is Oliver Warren.

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Dolly Maxwell. All three of us are first generation Washingtonians." Gil got Dolly a drink, then asked the host for the telephone. This was another opportunity he couldn't let pass.

At Rog Gaines' direction he went to the room where ladies' coats were piled on the bed and a boudoir lamp cast a soft glow over blue wallpaper. Gil hesitated. His last two attempts to settle his past had been unsuccessful, perhaps damaging, partly because of his haste, and he had no idea what he expected from Grace. But by this time he had the operator. He put in his call and asked the operator to report on the charges. A maid answered and called Mrs. Whitelaw to the telephone.

"Grace? This is Gil Horton. Remember me?"

"Gil who? Horton. Give me a moment. Let's see. Gil Horton? Why yes! Of course."

Sweat broke out on Gil's forehead. Was she joking or had his name really failed to register? "Grace," he said nervously, "I need to talk with you."

"Come on up. We're having some people in for cocktails, and we'd be delighted to have you too."

"I don't want to break in on a party. And I have someone with me. Perhaps later tonight—"

"Now's better. It's very informal. Bring her along. We've moved, you know."

"Yes, I saw the address in the telephone book."

It took about ten minutes to detach Dolly and say their goodbyes. Traffic was thick on the dusky highway, and Gil drove aggressively and recklessly. He felt Dolly tense as he weaved through traffic. Warren, too, he thought, yet what disturbed him about this encounter was not the alienation of an old friend but the effect of the atmosphere of secrecy he had been in. Until today he had felt as temperamentally suited to this atmosphere as anyone. Now he was conscious of the wearing effect of secrecy on his nerves like the vibration of a ship's engines and the constant pounding of the sea. And he was tired of it.

He glanced at Dolly from the corner of his eye. The physical attraction which she exerted on him had failed momentarily, or his power to respond had failed, and she knew it. Was there anything left? Yes, an attractive worthwhile young woman was left. Gil realized without being able to do anything about it how sadly impermanent their relationship was. Dolly was one of a succession

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of dalliances of varying length and intimacy since Grace. But there was a change: as he grew older, he was more critical, more careful to protect himself from commitment, less inclined to press his advantages on a lonely girl like Dolly who cared more for him than he for her. At the moment he was very glad of this because if he and Dolly had known each other better, this would have been a quarrel. But quarrel or not, she was having no fun.

Yet despite the obligation he felt to Dolly he was even more preoccupied than before with trying to judge how Grace actually felt toward him. In the light of what had happened he had imagined her hating him but not forgetting him or even pretending to forget him.

That night six years ago they had left the Roadside Rest Motel before midnight at high enough speed to throw a fusillade of gravel under the fenders. After a quick burst of talk about what had happened he had driven in silence and had thought several times that Grace was asleep, but passing headlights had shown that her eyes were wide, and at intervals she had offered to drive.

They reached the cottage on the Virginia coast about five in the morning. He had groggily taken the baggage into the house and fallen on a bed with his clothes on and gone to sleep. He awoke in a few hours feeling rotten, his eyes burning. The air in the house was fresher now. He smelled cigarette smoke and coffee. Grace sat on a window seat smoking and looking out at the colorless sea and sky which blended in the distance. The room was so cold he could see his own grey breath. She looked very dark around the eyes. "Grace," he said, alarmed. "You look bad. This room is too cold. You'll get sick! You haven't been to bed, have you?"

She got up and put her arms around him. "I am sick, Gil. Heartsick." He thought she was going to cry, but she put her face against his chest and said: "I've gotten you into a horrible mess."

"Gotten me into a mess? I got myself into it. If it's me you're worried about, I don't regret a thing. Besides nothing's going to come of that back there—"

She shook her head. "I've got a feeling that a lot's going to come of it." She forced a smile. "I guess you're right. I just feel guilty." After that she tried hard to be cheerful, but the trouble at the Roadside Rest poisoned them both. The fine cold rain kept up all day, and they had to stay inside.

That day he discovered that she got no pleasure from making

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love. "I'm just over-tired," she said. "Don't worry, Gil." He drank too much and neither could eat the dinner she insisted on cooking. That night he went to bed faintly nauseated, and the bed seemed to be turning when he closed his eyes.

For two days they talked with no one else except salesmen in grocery and liquor stores. They had planned to stay ten days, but he knew by the second night that eight more days would drive them mad, and his sated sexual appetite left him with a craving for some kind of work, something difficult and abstract.

They drove twenty miles a day for a New York newspaper to see if the motor court business was news. They discussed every possible outcome, every shade of catastrophe. Whiskey did not taste good to him for three days after his initial excesses, and she had an upset stomach, and seemed to be growing visibly thinner and more depressed but no less attractive. "My own cooking doesn't taste good to me," she said, and they went out for meals.

He could not leave her until he knew what Harrigan was going to do and this fact generated the only consistent desire he now had: to see her dead. When he shut his eyes, he saw her outstretched, her lips parted, her eyes shut. It made him grind his teeth and hate himself. What would be harder to explain or forget than a dead mistress? While he was dreaming, why didn't he dwell on some nobler fantasy which would at least solve their problems? This detestable image, he realized, came from an illustration in a boy's book showing a very white dead Guinevere by candlelight and a grief-stricken Lancelot.

He found only one way to push this beautiful and sentimental consummation of adultery out of his head, and that was to imagine killing her himself. The urge passed quickly, and since then he had nearly persuaded himself he had never felt it.

To his great relief she insisted on the fifth day that they leave—and not together. "You've been out of college only since last June," she said as they drove to a nearby town, "and I made you take the responsibility for this, and it's gotten horribly sordid. If I had had more sense, I'd have known this trip was foolish." They had said goodbye quickly, and she left him at the bus station, and with a heavy heart he watched her drive away.

He reached Boston the following morning. The city seemed in conspiracy against him, all his friends must know, the police would be on his doorstep. But these forebodings faded before two other

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problems: he was completely out of money and he was on the point of flunking out of law school. He therefore did not go to New York that week-end and in fact did not try to communicate with Grace for four days. When he finally called her, the maid said that Mrs. Whitelaw was not at home and could not be reached. He telephoned several times during the next few days, always by day when her husband would be absent, and was always told the same thing.

So he telephoned around twilight, and Grace answered. He said something about how he had been trying to get her, where had she been. She ended the conversation at once by saying: "Don't call me again, please. I don't think we have anything to talk about."

He had felt numb and dazed and tried to imagine what had happened. He had thought they were intolerably and inseparably joined, and she had cut them apart with one sentence. Perhaps she had begun another affair. The thought caused the icy burn of jealousy in his skin, and he felt keenly that he was a penniless law student on a fellowship and she was the wife of a rich man.

This feeling had a lot to do with his desire to make money and to get far away from New York. He had gone to work for the Miami office of a large stock brokerage firm and left after two years to come to Washington.

As he and Dolly approached her apartment house, he felt once more his dislike of New York and his customary tension on being there. He felt now, as he had for the past few years and without any self-indulgent cynicism, that Grace had been capable of a fling but not of anything so impractical as sacrificing her home to marry Gilbert Horton. The sight of their high brick apartment house filled him with apprehension. "A funny place to raise children," he muttered.

A liveried doorman took them up in the elevator, and Don Whitelaw greeted them cordially. He was almost bald, in his middle forties, with a strong face, and he dressed well. He seemed more attractive than Gil had imagined. "I'm so glad you were able to come," he said suavely. Does he know? thought Gil. There was no way of telling from his manner.

The party was fairly sedate and numbered around twenty people who ranged from a grey-flanneled undergraduate to an older couple who turned out to be Whitelaw's parents. "Grace will be right out," said the host. He introduced Gil and Dolly to a

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cluster of people nearby and left them when the bell rang and more guests arrived.

Gil caught sight of Grace in the dining room. She was giving instructions to a maid, and he was struck by the biological character of the changes in her. Her face looked thin, and her waist small and neat, but she was heavier in the bosom and hips, and her bare arms were quite round. Without noticing Gil, she advanced and spoke pleasantly to some guests between them, and then shook hands warmly with Gil and Dolly. "What a pretty girl, Gil." Grace spoke the compliment with the freedom of an older woman toward a blooming teen-ager. "I'm glad you brought her. You're in Washington, you said." The butler presented their drinks, and Grace departed to greet the guests who had just arrived.

Gil had to restrain himself from staring at Grace. He had not anticipated being put off by her role as hostess, and now he was afraid that he would not be able to talk with her privately at all. She showed no sign of making it easy for him, and he wondered again if she had been joking about having to make an effort to remember him. Now the changes in her, the unfamiliar room and faces made that by-gone affair seem unreal—no more real than the story he had just mentioned to Oliver Warren.

He listened to Grace's easy laughter and reflected that she seemed busy and healthy. The great change in her was the loss of a rebellious quality which he had always thought was her mainspring. She was *not* the same person, she now seemed cautious and motherly.

It was a half-hour before Dolly was occupied with the undergraduate and he could catch Grace alone. "Grace, I need to talk with you," he said in a low voice.

Smiling faintly, she turned to him. "All right."

"I mean alone." He immediately saw himself in a grisly false position, and of course he was putting her on the spot too.

"I have guests, Gil, and I don't see what—" She paused. "All right." She led him into a small thickly carpeted room which reminded him of a men's club. She sat down, and he stood uneasily. He could not make himself start right out about the security problem. She was too distant, and mentioning these old follies seemed insulting. "How are things going?" he said.

"Fine." She waited for him to speak, and when he didn't, she continued with remarkable ease. "I could tell you a lot about the

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children. I used to get so bored with mothers' chatter about their children, and I promised myself I wouldn't. But of course that was before I knew how fascinating one's own are. I want to have five, but since I'm thirty-four and not yet half way, I may settle for only four."

"I'd like to see them. I'd heard you had two girls."

"Believe me, it's wonderful, Gil. Get yourself a wife and have a few. Not that it's helped my figure." She looked at one arm disapprovingly. "I shouldn't wear this sleeveless dress."

"You look very pretty, Grace."

"Being a mother's gotten me some grey hair, I'm afraid."

"I don't see a one."

"I dye it. And I'm dieting now. I've already lost four pounds." She was smiling, and she seemed not so much self-satisfied as saved. He realized that he had been hoping for some signs of failure in her marriage, that she would need him, and evidently she did not.

"I hesitate to bring this up since you didn't remember me on the telephone." He reached for the doorknob.

"Leave the door open, please," she said coolly. Her tone gave him a disagreeable thrill. He turned slowly and looked at her. "Dolly's certainly a pretty girl," said Grace, smiling and smoothing over the rebuff. "When I saw her, I thought you had some news for us."

"That she and I are engaged? Not now. Probably not ever."

"As I said just now, I wish I'd started on my family younger. It's the only really satisfying thing I've ever done."

This too was a reflection on their affair. If she meant for them to talk as though overheard, he was wasting his time. "Dolly's a nice girl," he said. "I don't know whether she's interested in marriage."

Grace seemed genuinely amused at this statement.

"Well, I'm fond of her," he said, sitting down. "You know the movies rest on the axiom that for every man there's a right woman and for every woman a right man during his or her lifetime, and when they meet, it's a perfect fit. And in the ethics of the movies the great sin is to obstruct the coming together of this man and woman, and the real subject of nearly every film is the overcoming of obstacles to their coming together. And I hate to admit it but I think there's a lot in it. It's certainly been true of me. The way I felt about you doesn't come but once."

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She regarded him incredulously, got up, and walked toward the door. He moved between her and the door. "This is important to me, Grace, or I wouldn't ask."

"I can believe it's important," she said in a soft voice, her eyes narrowed. "I didn't invite you to come here and trifle with me. If you've been wondering if you have some hold on me, you don't." Her face flushed, and with lips tight, she moved to pass him.

"If you had no intention of talking with me, why didn't you at least give me a hint on the telephone?" She made no answer, and he went on: "I'm in trouble, Grace. A hitch in my security clearance. I just want to find out if you know any reason why."

"Oh." Her expression softened. "Are you being persecuted?"

This idea really had not occurred to him, and for a moment he was tempted by it, and the chance it gave of resigning in a huff and denouncing Kronjager as a fascist. "No, I'm not being persecuted. The agency just can't afford to put anyone subject to blackmail in a top-secret job. The thing came up this morning and got me kind of panicky. Now I realize I wanted to talk the thing over with someone—which I'm not supposed to do. If I'd stopped to think it through, I'd have realized nothing useful could come of this, so maybe you're right, I did come for pretty unworthy personal reasons." He moved aside for her to pass ahead of him.

"Wait, Gil. You want to know if there's been a scandal? I don't think so." They sat down at the far end of the room in big armchairs. His hand accidentally brushed her bare arm, and both recoiled.

"Does Don know about us?" he asked.

"He's too upright himself to believe that of me. Maybe upright isn't the word. Anyway I'm sure he doesn't know."

"Too upright! But he was having an affair—"

"Believe it or not, my telling you that is one of the things I feel most guilty about, and I certainly thought he was, and felt neglected. But he was in love with his work. Of course that didn't make for a perfect marriage and doesn't now. But when he said he was working at night or going on a business trip he was telling the truth. I think you're like him in that—you've probably fallen in love with your work." She rattled the ice in her glass. "Oh, I'm stalling. I promised myself I wouldn't tell you this ever, but I suppose I'll have to."

A woman's head appeared in the door, and she said: "We've

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had a lovely time, Grace. We have to go." Grace went to the door and spoke to her guests while Gil watched her impatiently. She must work to keep that waistline, he thought. He could picture her doing exercises and hating them.

She returned to him, and he said: "What is it?"

"Soon after I came back that March, that Harrigan called me on the telephone. He threatened to go to Don. I told him to go ahead. Then he threatened to file a complaint with the village police down there. That would have meant the newspapers. So I paid him."

Gil leaped to his feet. "He's been blackmailing you! Why didn't you tell me?"

"It was just that one time."

"You should have *told* me! The idea of your standing that alone!"

"You have no idea how much I wanted to tell you, Gil."

"Why didn't you?"

"I was afraid I'd lose you."

"Lose me? You thought I'd run? Do you remember how many times I called you, and what you said when I finally did talk with you?"

"You were dying to get loose. You didn't call me for days. I thought another claim on you would make it just that much worse."

"But I wasn't dying to get loose! I—"

"Let's not argue. That was a long time ago."

He sat down and closed his eyes. This talk had stirred up a lot of old bad feelings. "I can't understand why Harrigan didn't keep it up. That's the way they operate. They bleed the victim for years. How much did he ask?"

She hesitated. "Five hundred dollars."

"Really? I'm surprised he didn't come back to make a killing."

"I thought there must be a time limit on filing a complaint."

"He would have tried you again."

"There was another reason I didn't tell you," she said. She obviously had misgivings about saying this. She clasped her hands tightly together. "Once we had a chauffeur."

"Go on."

"When I was eleven, we had a chauffeur named Josef. With us four months. He seemed moody. Not surly—just preoccupied. I remember the back of his head; it was flat like Boris Karloff's. The last day he worked for us he drove me to a party. That night he

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took a hatchet out of the tool room and hacked his wife to pieces. The subject was taboo in our family, and I never found out why he did it. This sounds awful, Gil, but something about you down there at the cottage reminded me of Josef. If you could have seen yourself when we talked about that man Harrigan. I just didn't know what you'd do to him."

"You thought I'd kill him? You didn't know me very well then." No, he thought with ice in his marrow, that wasn't so. She did know him quite well, and how much more had she known? "That's why you broke with me! You were afraid of me!"

"Not so loud, Gil." She was squeezing her hands together, and the lines around her mouth deepened in pain. "No! That's not it!"

Harrigan had ruined his affair with Grace, and now his enemies, Harrigan and Kronjager, whether they knew each other or not, were in alliance against him. And he felt irresistible murderous anger toward both of them. He saw Harrigan's face as clearly as though he had seen him yesterday, in the center of a bloody void in his brain. "Thanks," he said and started for the door.

"Gil, what are you going to do?" He did not answer. He saw that she was staring with wide eyes at his clenched fists. "Gil, don't go! You can't do any good! Listen to me, Gil, it can't be Harrigan. He wouldn't tell them this because in their eyes he's a blackmailer and a criminal. It must be something else."

"I can't have this hanging over me. It must be Harrigan. One of Kronjager's men stumbled over him." He walked out the library door.

All the guests had gone except Dolly, who was sitting silently with Don Whitelaw. Gil had the feeling that what had gone on was obvious, but he felt no embarrassment. Whitelaw looked puzzled and worried. As Gil and Dolly were leaving, Grace seemed on the point of arguing with him further, but only said polite goodbyes. He went down in the elevator with a fading image of Grace's anxious face in his mind.

At the car he said stiffly: "Dolly, I have an errand to do. I'm sorry it has to be now. I know today hasn't been much fun for you. You'd better not come. It'll be a long drive. Where shall I take you?"

Dolly looked amazed and hurt. "What is it, Gil?" She didn't wait for an answer. "It's some bad trouble or something, isn't it? I'm coming with you. I'll wait in the car."

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"You may wish you hadn't."

His driving out of the city was fast and reckless, and Dolly watched him anxiously. As they sped southward on the same highway he had taken in another year with another woman, facing a stream of headlights pouring from the darkness, the first hot blast of anger in his heart passed, and he grew more deliberate in his plans for revenge. Now he knew that he wanted not murder but a fight, and that urge was itching in the fibers of his muscles.

As his anger cooled, questions about Grace troubled him again. He wondered if she had ever loved him enough to divorce her husband and marry him. He wished he had asked her tonight about that, but he decided, considering his own feeble grip on the past, that she probably did not know the answer. He wondered if she had had any affairs since. Probably if she had understood her husband at that time, he thought, she would never have undertaken the one with me.

"Gil." Dolly's voice startled him. "This has something to do with that woman, doesn't it?"

"Not exactly."

"Well at least tell me what it's about."

"I'm sorry, I can't."

"You were talking with her about it, weren't you? Is she cleared for top secret?"

"Dolly, don't you see I don't *want* to talk about it?"

She sat in silence for a moment. "I guess I shouldn't have come," she said. "You're in love with her, aren't you?"

"I used to be."

"No, I don't believe there's any love in you right now," she said. "And I don't like you this way. You seem so hateful."

"It's not you. I hate just one person." His own words fired again his rage toward Harrigan. It was really Harrigan who had taken Grace from him, for if it hadn't been for him, the affair with Grace wouldn't have been subject to such strain.

Dolly only broke the silence once more, to say: "I'm glad. I'm glad I've seen this side of you."

He had often revisited the Roadside Rest Motel in dreams, and now he had no trouble finding it, for he felt drawn to it. But instead of some sense of recognition when he pulled off the highway, the place looked unfamiliar. He parked the car at the foot of the hill because he wanted to keep Dolly at a distance from what would

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happen. "I'll be back in a little while," he said and walked up the hill. Concrete had replaced gravel for a driveway, and the pattern of lights seen from the hill had changed. The hill was not so high as he remembered, the motor court and restaurant closer together, and even the horizon seemed flatter. A half mile away he saw headlights flowing along the highway. Overhead the "Vacancy" sign was still burning.

He opened the door of the office without knocking. The only light in the room was the grey glow of a television screen, and watching it was an old man with white hair. "I'm looking for Harrigan," said Gil.

"Harrigan?" said the old man, still looking at the television, his mind obviously not engaging the question.

"The man who used to run this place," said Gil.

The old man turned and cocked his head wisely at Gil. "You've come too late. About seven years too late. Harrigan's been dead seven years this January."

"Then it's not the same Harrigan. The one I'm looking for was still alive that March."

The old man frowned and thrust out his lips. "You're right. It was April he died. I had my months mixed." He smacked his lips. "Harrigan was killed in a hit-and-run accident on the road down there." He pointed through the picture window. "It was kind of a funny thing. Some said he was in some illegal doings, and underworld folks ran him down. Gangsters he'd crossed. I don't know. It happened before I came here. They say he had a little black book in code the police never could make out." He stole a glance at the television as he talked; he seemed torn between his natural garrulousness and the fascination of the program which had just begun. "You want a room? We got one left."

"No thanks. But I appreciate the information." Gil stood there, vaguely aware of the gesticulating television screen. He still had that itch to look for certainty, to tie up his past in a neat bundle and dispose of it, and the old man had given him a rather dusty answer. "Do you have a telephone?" he asked. In a booth just outside the door, Gil called Kronjager in Washington. "Hello," said a voice.

"Mr. Kronjager, this is Gilbert Horton. Did I wake you up?"

"Yes."

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"I want to ask you if what really interests you is something that in your eyes has unfitted me for employment or simply that you don't want me to be subject to illegal pressure?"

"What?" said Kronjager. He was not entirely awake yet, and a note of annoyance sounded in his voice at being put at this disadvantage.

"Brush away the cobwebs," said Gil, feeling strangely exhilarated by Kronjager's sleepiness. "Did you find Harrigan's little black book?"

There was a long silence. "We can't talk about this on the telephone," said Kronjager.

"Then can we get together in about two hours?"

"I'll meet you at my office if you like."

Gil walked back to his car with a feeling of sombre excitement. When he opened the car door, Dolly did not look at him but said in a strained voice: "Did you get it straightened out?"

"Not yet," he said. She was hurt, but she no longer felt quarrelsome, and this must mean, he decided, that she was already making plans which did not include him, she had renounced any claim she thought she had on him and was determined to make the best of a bad time.

They had said only a few more sentences to each other by the time they reached Washington. He had suggested they stop for something to eat, but she said she wasn't hungry, that she had eaten some of the party food at the Whitelaws. She avoided looking at him when he left her at her apartment door.

Washington was deserted, the streets shiny with moisture, as he drove past miles of dark government windows to V Building. A night watchman looked at his identity card and told him Mr. Kronjager was waiting. Gil's footsteps rang in the empty hall. Kronjager, wearing a topcoat and looking very tired, nodded silently at Gil, and Gil took a chair.

"I think you'd better tell me about the motor court business," said Kronjager.

"I checked in at that motel with a woman. Harrigan sensed we weren't married and blackmailed her. The accident that killed him apparently stopped it."

"That's about what I thought. We got Harrigan's list in con-

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nection with another case. Took our cypher men about a half hour to crack his little black book. Your name was in it." Kronjager's shadowy face looked frozen. "Anything else?"

Gil told him in two sentences about the Communist rally and the abortion anecdote. "And that's everything I can think of," he concluded.

Kronjager got up and paced about behind his desk. "You called me from that motel tonight, didn't you? Just what were you doing there?"

Gil hesitated. "I won't lie to you. I just heard about the blackmail tonight. It made me mad, and I guess I started out with the intention of breaking Harrigan's neck."

Kronjager wheeled suddenly. His hands were trembling, and his lips were white with anger. He slammed his fist on his desk top. "That's splendid! That was using your head!" He sat down again, scowling.

"This means I won't get the job in X Division, I suppose."

"Yes," said Kronjager, his voice cold again. "You see, Horton, there is no X Division. The name is a cover for a number of activities performed by other offices, one of which is Security Division."

Gil stared in amazement. "Then where was I supposed to go?"

"I'd planned for you to take my place."

"Your place!" Gil's heart beat violently. This is more testing, he thought. "But I'm not fitted for it. It's not the kind of job I like. I've had no experience in it."

"You're right. No one is fitted for it. But I've observed you through one-way glass in other rooms, I've seen your work, I know you very well. You're scheduled to be my assistant for six weeks to learn my job. No one who really wants this job is good enough for it—certainly no one in Security Division is. It's not the cul-de-sac you may imagine. We do a great deal more in this division than most people think. It would make you the third most powerful man in the agency. I'm to be the new deputy director."

Gil looked about the bare office. It would be his office, with more money, more prestige, more power. His gaze met his own reflection in a dark window pane, and in a flash he saw he could not turn it down. "Let's go," said Kronjager. "It's late."

At the entrance Gil said: "Mr. Kronjager, wait. I may as well

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tell you now that I don't believe in doing this job the way you're doing it. The business today for example."

Kronjager looked him over thoughtfully. "You will," he said and walked off into the darkness.

Gill walked slowly back to his car. The damp night wind hit his face, and he saw the bobbing of lights in the Potomac ahead of him. Oddly he felt the urge to make himself a better man—too good a man for Kronjager's job—but the feeling faded almost at once and left him a bitter aftertaste. He felt too a reawakened feeling of loss about Grace, a physical sensation in his throat like homesickness. I should have found some great job, he thought, and set out years ago for some heavenly city.

He stood struggling to draw some new conclusion about his own life, but he felt that the age of sudden illumination had passed for him just as the time when he could have Grace had passed. His belief that he had not changed was an illusion; he knew he was changing greatly. He thought of Dolly, and the knowledge that he was losing her—perhaps had already lost her—made him homesick for a home which he had not yet had. The wind in his face smelled of water, and he felt like a man adrift in a small boat, and the past was like a great ocean liner steaming away from him.

When he reached Dolly's apartment, a light was still burning. It took her nearly five minutes to get to the door. The dim light gleaming on her blond hair and satin robe, she looked at him with surprise and suspicion.

He felt he must get to know her, and not merely to overcome that hard-boiled crankiness which had been growing in him for years. "Dolly, I've treated you badly today, and I can't tell you much, but I would like to try to explain."

"Come in," she said, "and make it good."

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THOMAS BARBOUR

Revivals and Revisions: Theatre Chronicle

OF THE PLAYERS in the past New York season's presentation of *Volpone* at the Rooftop Theatre only Robert Blackburn (Leone) showed some instinct for the elegance of speech and expansiveness of gesture appropriate to the comedy. Yet he was rather a sore thumb in the presence of Howard Da Silva, Alfred Ryder, and Art Smith (Volpone, Mosca, and Voltore, respectively), who, though fine actors within their limits, gave to the play the stamp more of neighboring Second Avenue than of distant Venice, of seedy thuggery rather than flamboyant depravity. Arthur Malet's Corbaccio was conceived rather as a spider than a gorcrow, but an appropriately hideous arachnid nonetheless. Mordecai Gorelik designed some delightfully ingenious settings, and these were assembled in the audience's view by a quintet of exceedingly acrobatic young men—a spirited, but rather impertinent conceit, suggesting a kind of stylishness nowhere else apparent during the evening save in the performance of the aforementioned Mr. Blackburn. The production's shortcomings, while many, were not, however, altogether depressing; I, for one, found them almost inconsiderable in my over-riding bemusement at the management's (Sidney Bernstein and Gene Frankel) choice of a script. Why ever mount Ruth Langner's translation of Stefan Zweig's German adaptation of *Volpone* when Jonson's play is right at hand?

There is no question that, with its excision of the dwarf, the eunuch, and the hermaphrodite and of the sub-plot centered on the gulling of Sir Politic Would-Be, the Zweig version is a more compact and tidy play than the original. If these deletions are to be made, however—and, in these days of inflated production costs, the persuasions of economy may be enough to recommend them—, why not simply make the appropriate cuts in the Jonson text? I have seen it done and know that it is quite simple surgery; the scars left after the operation are scarcely visible, certainly a small price to pay for keeping Jonson's exuberant verse in preference to Miss Langner's pallid paraphrases. Zweig's only substantial contribution is a new ending to the comedy, and it must be supposed that this was the deciding factor in the producers' choice. Possibly they felt that modern audiences, conditioned by the horse-opera categories of "good guys" and "bad guys", could not accept a play without an obvious hero; and apparently all the principals are "bad guys" in the play that Jonson wrote. But Zweig has come up with a hero, and presumably it matters little that he has had to disregard any idea of character consistency and turn the whole play upside down in order to accomplish his feat. Lo and behold! Mosca, the upstart, the parasite, who has assisted in Volpone's deceptions

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with no real appreciation of Volpone's motives or of his peculiar delight in their execution, seeking but to feather his own nest and quite willing to double-cross his master at the first opportunity—this Mosca has all along been nursing—of all things!—a social consciousness. According to Zweig, the Fly is the true son of the masses, waiting only the chance to beat the merchants and the gentry at their own game; having appropriated Volpone's wealth, he is last seen opening his coffers to the poor of Venice, while the Fox slinks, ignominious, into exile.

Now, this is all very well, and there may be some who prefer a Mosca who behaves handsomely in accordance with the principles of humanitarianism than one who acts believably according to the practices of humankind; but I submit that Jonson has already provided a hero of sorts, scarcely a "good guy" to be sure, but, nevertheless, a hero, imbued with a curious kind of dignity, dramatically more effective and comedically more entertaining by far than Stefan Zweig's sentimental substitute. He is the immoral moralist, whose greed and lust is distinguished from his fellows' by the important fact that he alone is without hypocrisy. Since he is unencumbered by self-deception, he alone is free really to enjoy his depravity—and with what marvelous abandon he enters into it!—while we, watching him, are permitted to share his relish as long as we are willing to share his essential honesty. Detached and objective as he is, he is truly the knave as artist with always an efficient advantage over those who are merely knaves by nature. When he is tripped up at last, it is because he has mistakenly imputed to his associate his own enthusiasm for the pure art of villainy, but he holds a trump card still, which none of his adversaries suspect he can play, so foreign is his nature fundamentally to theirs: having painted the portrait of vice, he is quite prepared to sign his name to it. When it looks as though he must suffer while another escapes the consequences of treachery, he is readier to expose himself to further punishment than to let his betrayer's guilt pass unacknowledged. So he doffs his disguise before the judges of the Scrutineo and proclaims, with a pride that strikes me as something very close to heroic, "I am Volpone!" The statement that follows is the only example of candor in the play; it clears the air for the correct distribution of justice and sends all the "bad guys" packing—Volpone included, of course, who never asked us to think of him as anything else. The comedy firmly centered on such a character is *champagne brut* surely, compared to which Zweig's concoction must seem a pretty watery brew.

I wonder if there really is such a resistance among American playgoers to so-called "dark comedy" as our producers would have us believe. Jean Anouilh's strange blending of farce and vitriol, *Waltz of the Toreadors*, may have puzzled the patrons of the Coronet Theatre, but it seems rather to have intrigued them, too; and perhaps a few more such imports will wean them to the French opinion that comedy need not be always all sugar and light. The prevailing attitude among producers here, however, seems to second the timidity shown at the Rooftop; we had another

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example in the case of *Measure for Measure*, sponsored by the American Shakespeare Festival at the Phoenix. In this instance the text was not significantly tampered with, it is true; but there is more than one way to water wine, and director John Houseman's method was no less successful than if he had rewritten the play.

By the ordinary standards of commercial entertainment, which recognize a comedy only in the audience's laughter, *Measure for Measure* hardly qualifies as such, although it ends in a happy atmosphere of mercy tempering justice and marriages in the offing. The contentions here are between life and death, lust and chastity; and, though there is much to make for wry amusement in the ironies that are developed, the issues at stake are far too consequential to be really a laughing matter. Moreover, the nice distinctions of black and white that are the backbone of commercial comedy are never clearly drawn here: Antonio is too tortured and introspective a soul to be a conventional villain, while Isabella's virtue is mitigated by her prudery as Claudio's amiability is by his weakness. Even the Duke has been, by his own confession, derelict in his duties and therefore to a good extent responsible for the afflictions of his subjects. Most of the remaining characters are pimps, bawds, and other dissolutes, ribald enough but scarcely inviting our unquestioning affection. Central to the play is the theme of fornication, in which every character is in one way or another involved, and nowhere is it implied that the prevailing licentiousness of Vienna is in any degree to be condoned, like, for example, the simple-hearted, cakes-and-ale rowdyism of Sir Toby and his cronies in *Twelfth Night*. What we are given in *Measure for Measure* is an unflattering picture of man in the state of corruption, and we are asked, in the figure of Claudio, to consider therefore the value of his very life. If he is spared it is not by our approval, but, as all are party to his sin, by our sympathy: "He, who the sword of heaven will bear,/Should be as holy as severe." The play that poses such questions and provides such unsentimental answers is a play to make us think, and thought is a notable deterrent to the spontaneity of laughter.

Mr. Houseman's task, then, was to deflect the aim of *Measure for Measure* from the mind and direct it at the funny-bone, but, since the script offers every resistance to such perversion, the result was merely a bewildering aimlessness. He tried, however, and his major effort was to make the play as incredible as possible, for only in the context of unreality would it be possible to weigh lechery against death with any hope of the issues' not being taken seriously. Shakespeare suggested an accidental basis for such a transformation by placing the action in Vienna, although that locale is quite irrelevant to his conception. Vienna suggested, in turn, not the real city, but the never-never land of comic operetta, and, whisk! we were transported there, with Arnold Moss (as the Duke) trigged out for all the world like the Prisoner of Zenda and Richard Waring (Antonio) pompadoured as though he were playing the younger Strauss in *The Great Waltz*. Unfortunately, however, Rouben Ter-Arutunian's basic setting of neutral grey slat-work—which gave me rather the im-

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pression of an outsized, beach-club dressing cabin—did little to supplement the idea of Franz Josef's hypothetical capital. Unfortunately, too, for Mr. Houseman's overall conception, a couple of the principal actors apparently just refused to play along with it: Richard Easton's Claudio was most affecting, and Mr. Waring, though I felt he failed to suggest Antonio's inner struggles with the growth of desire, yet came through with a properly sober and well-spoken external characterization.

Mr. Moss, on the other hand, entered fully into the spirit of the game and was complimented generally in the press for transforming the Duke from the dull fellow he seems inevitably cut out to be into something of a clown: true, he mugged and twinkled furiously and provoked occasional titters, but in the process the significance of his position in the play was—perhaps conveniently—lost. Norman Lloyd capered and contorted nimbly as Lucio, suggesting the fantastic all right, but little of the mean-minded sycophant I am quite sure Shakespeare intended; and Nina Foch, with extraordinary blond bangs peeping from under her novice's veil, walked through the part of Isabella with nary a hint of that noble, but oddly trying, lady's passionate interest in her virginity. The more satisfying performances of Nancy Wickwire and Jacqueline Brooks in the lesser roles of Mariana and Juliet, respectively, should convince any prospective producer of classics that a talent for style acting developed in off-Broadway playhouses and in various festivals and repertory groups about the country serves Shakespeare better than merely a name won on Broadway or television.

While the principals, with the exceptions noted, bid for what they could have of our laughter by refusing to persuade us of the actuality of their problems, the true clowns of the piece lost out in the general flight from reality, wherein their valid comedy is rooted. Hiram Sherman (Pompey) is a skillful entertainer, who projects a diverting blend of innocence and urbanity, but he was amusing as Hiram Sherman rather than Pompey; neither he nor Gertrude Kinnel's Mistress Overdone nor any of her girls communicated the seamy raucousness of the taverns and bawdy-houses from which they were supposed to have sprung. In short, the play that Mr. Houseman imagined was a pale and tentative affair with little of life in it, scarcely the forceful and astringent comedy-drama that Shakespeare conceived.

My complaint against the examples of distortion at the Rooftop and at the Phoenix should not be taken as proceeding from any notion that age, of itself, somehow renders every old play inviolable. Many so-called classics are hardly worth producing today except as somewhat academic curiosities; but it is imaginable that some of these, while no longer useful as they stand, may yet provide the basis for a completely revised production, having quite possibly just the opposite effect of what the original writer intended. There are some who believe, for example, that *The Merchant of Venice* can be made to yield a persuasive tract against anti-Semitism, and, though I do not agree with them, I

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will grant their arguments bear serious consideration, especially if they do not fool themselves into believing that they can summon Shakespeare to their defense; I am better disposed to go along with those who have found that certain nineteenth century melodramas can be turned into reasonably successful comic entertainments. If Mr. Houseman, then, recognized *Measure for Measure* as a "dark comedy" (as I surely hope he did) and still felt that it could be presented better as a light comedy, we cannot blame him absolutely for meddling with a classic, but only relatively for not managing conspicuously to improve upon it—and incidentally for proposing to sell the reinterpreted play as Shakespeare's. Messrs. Bernstein and Frankel at the Rooftop, now, made no bones about the fact that they were putting on Zweig's *Volpone* and not Jonson's. The only wrong they were guilty of was preferring an inferior play; but there is no categorical reason why Zweig should not rewrite *Volpone*, any more than why the much reviled Nahum Tate should not have rewritten *King Lear*. We do not regret Shakespeare's adapting Kyd's (or somebody's) *Hamlet*, and we should not regret Dryden's turning *Antony and Cleopatra* into *All for Love*; both came through with very fine plays, one presumably far superior to its original. Tate and Zweig, quite simply, did not; but they might have.

Even when a director chooses to respect the intentions of a Shakespeare or a Jonson (as we hope he would, not because their plays are sacrosanct as classics, but because they are still engaging in terms of a living theatre), he should yet not necessarily be bound to an archeologist's reverence for old texts and old ways of staging them. A play is a communication and, as such, comprehends both the message and him to whom it is addressed; three and a half centuries of change in tastes, conventions, and prejudices must prevent the playgoer of 1957 from seeing quite the same play enjoyed by him of 1600, however faithfully it is reconstructed. Thus a director, having to keep both the message and the addressee in mind, may legitimately be granted a very considerable latitude in his dealing with classic scripts. In theory, even a stem-to-stern rewriting job might be welcome, as expressing, paradoxically, a particular playwright's intention more effectively for a modern audience than would the original. While, for instance, Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (lately and briefly revived at the City Center) may strike us as but a charming antique, Bertholt Brecht's revamping of it in *The Three-Penny Opera* (still flourishing at the Theatre de Lys) may communicate now the satiric bite and force that was once conveyed by the earlier work. In practice, of course, our rather liberal definition of a director's responsibilities would be more inhibiting than at first it seems. The best plays of the past so perfectly answer the requirements of a particular type of staging that they cannot be made to conform happily to another radically different, and they are so timeless in their application as to make negligible the differences between centuries-separated audiences and impertinent any attempted significant alteration. In such instances, whatever a modern adapter adds or cuts or alters is likely to make him pay for an inconsequential gain with a far more

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serious loss, and he would do better to humble himself to seek among available elements of modern staging the closest equivalents to the old only where exact duplication proves impossible.

Two seasons ago, director Jack Landau undertook to mount a production of *The White Devil* at the Phoenix on a severely limited budget, which prevented his being able either to reconstruct the conditions of Webster's stage or—as would have been very effective—to evoke the overblown richness of Renaissance Italy. Under these circumstances, he was forced to find a contemporary equivalent to convey the tragedy's all-important aura of criminal degeneracy even if at the sacrifice of its sense of sumptuousness. By clothing his rogues in trenchcoats, collars turned up, and setting them to work on a stark, almost barren, stage, he managed to call forth an image of the modern hoodlum that accorded amazingly well with his playwright's presumed intent. Moreover, he was wise enough not to subdue his actors to the costumes and *décor*, but let them play full-out so that he was able to retrieve in the speaking of the verse what was lost in the setting; as a result there was communicated both the immediate reality of Webster's gangsters and the horrible extravagance of their passions, which makes for the magnificence of *The White Devil*. This past season the same director tackled the same playwright's *The Duchess of Malfi*, again at the Phoenix and now under the auspices of the American Shakespeare Festival. It is distressing to report that the availability of greater resources apparently served only to stifle Mr. Landau's imaginativeness and ingenuity. It was clear from what he wrote about the play in the press before its opening and from its description in the program as "an Elizabethan thriller" that he still appreciated the spirit of Webster and meant to express it in his production. But, for some inexplicable reason, he chose to imitate Mr. Houseman and decorate his stage in the same late nineteenth century style as his associate's *Measure for Measure*. He did try to transmute the basic set with dark drapes that gloomed upon the scene from time to time like ominous bat-wings, but Mr. Ter-Arutunian's ever-obtrusive slats simply refused to cooperate. The costumes, which I can only imagine the Festival inherited in abundance from some defunct Shubert operetta and felt obliged use up as soon as possible, suggested neither the opulence nor the stark malevolence of *The Duchess of Malfi*, but gave to the production, as in the case of *Measure for Measure*, a wholly unwarranted flavor of remote and romantic airiness.

I hesitate to speak harshly of the players, for I should like to think that the reticence that pervaded the preview performance I saw vanished later as they found their stage legs; but I recognized only spasmodically —notably in the duet between Julia (Jan Farrand) and the Cardinal (Hurd Hatfield)—the fire and fury I recalled from Mr. Landau's earlier Websterian essay. Jacqueline Brooks maintained her customary energy and brilliance, but I do not think she was happily cast as the Duchess. As a tragedienne, Miss Brooks has a tendency to get rather heavy-handed

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in a way quite out of keeping with this bedeviled heroine. For surely the stoic Duchess should be the placid center of the storm that rages about her; yet at the Phoenix she wooed her Antonio (Earl Hyman) so energetically that she suggested more of her brothers' lasciviousness than the domestic tenderness we usually associate with her character.

The craze, at least among costumers and set designers, for converting Elizabethan playwrights into late Victorians or Edwardians did not exhaust itself with the presentations of the American Shakespeare Festival. We had another example of it in the visiting Old Vic's *Troilus and Cressida*; but that intriguing, if controversial, production had otherwise little in common with what went on at the Phoenix. There may be differences of opinion as to the validity of the conception of its director, Tyrone Guthrie, but I trust none will deny that his attack was both thorough and specific in a way that Mr. Houseman's and Mr. Landau's were not. For, not only was the *décor* (by Frederick Crooke) attractive and harmonious in itself, but the arguments for the choice of its details could be traced back in each case to the play itself and not merely to some casual notion of Dr. Guthrie's that it would be novel and amusing to update his Greeks and Trojans to *circa* 1900.

Troilus and Cressida offers a real challenge to any director; it is difficult to deny the power of the work, but equally hard to locate the source of this power. Its structure is somewhat chaotic; its plot, neither too clear nor especially arresting; its characters, for the most part, rather less than three-dimensional; and its verse seldom remarkably easy on the ear. The play is best understood as a satire, a darker comedy even than *Measure for Measure*, which Shakespeare seems to have written out of a bitter indignation that left him little patience to clarify his dramaturgy, so that it remains confused and confusing, but nonetheless a mordant commentary on human frailty. Its characters wear only the masks of Homeric heroes and heroines; underneath, they are small men and women, lustful and expedient, without honor either in love or in battle. The main strength of the comedy, then, lies in its satiric vigor, and a director's first task should be to point up its ironies as effectively as he can. This is just what Dr. Guthrie set out to do, with, I think, considerable success.

He points out himself in a program note, "Enjoyment of almost any satirical work depends upon analogy with our own environment. . . . If we had dressed [the play] in 'classical' style, in togas and sandals, it would not be easy to differentiate easily between soldiers and civilians, Trojans and Greeks. It would have been more difficult to show that these Classical Figures were being presented with some degree of mockery." He might have observed, too, that this same problem was met, consciously or not, and similarly solved when the play was first produced; for the Elizabethan playgoers did not see legendary Greeks and Trojans on their stage, but Elizabethans. The play could not be realized, however, in exactly contemporary terms, since, as he further notes, "one of its important premises is that war is sport, a premise to which no one nowadays

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can possibly subscribe." Moreover, the difficulty of accommodating a strictly modern visual metaphor to Shakespeare's heightened language suggests another reason why Dr. Guthrie was wise to set his production in the period immediately before World War I, a time both near enough to facilitate the communication of the play and remote enough not to be jarringly anachronistic.

Having selected his over-all production scheme, he was not content just to let it go at that; each element seemed carefully selected to contribute its share of significance to the total picture. The Trojans were transported to Graustark, the yellow and soft grey uniforms of Priam's soldiery bespeaking their fastidious elegance and soon-to-be-shattered romanticism. The Greeks, on the other hand, became something very like Prussians, ruthless and practical, with eagle-crested helmets and dark blue uniforms trimmed with red the color of old blood. Ulysses stood somewhat apart from his fellow warriors, a seemingly gentler figure in the long coat and peaked cap of a naval officer; Thersites was transformed into a war correspondent, wrapped in an Inverness cape and toting a camera, the cynical civilian in the midst of the military; and Helen appeared as an over-dressed, over-blown belle, lolling on a white piano. Where Dr. Guthrie overreaches himself—and perhaps his picture of Helen was a bit extravagant—, he invites criticism for drawing too much attention to his own ingenuity; at his worst, he is indeed a "ham", but, at his best, the most perceptive classic director in the business. I might question his turning Pandarus into a limp-wristed auntie (though this characterization "plays" well enough), but I must be grateful for his chilling delineation of Achilles and Patroclus—the one, a dissipated muscle-man in a bathrobe; the other, a lank, weak-chinned youth padding about on sneakered feet. Here was no noble Hellenic companionship, but a sordid association of sadist and masochist that served to underscore the discrepancy between the ideal and the real and give life to *Troilus and Cressida's* essential irony.

Few of the classics revived last season called for the unorthodoxy of Dr. Guthrie's approach, but only one provided a significant example of how much is still to be gained from sticking close to the script and avoiding the temptation to qualify it with tricks and novelties. Stephen Porter staged a remarkably faithful and efficient production of Molière's *The Misanthrope* in the tiny, three-sided arena of Theatre East. True, his text represented a revision of a sort since it had to be translated out of the French, but Richard Wilbur's translation (which William Becker has discussed in an earlier issue of this magazine) is truly an extraordinary job, not only capturing the sense and spirit of Molière's verse, but managing to preserve its couplet pattern as well. The director and his actors brought the same striking humility and integrity to the play, subduing themselves so completely to it that I felt that, for once, 'adequate' (*i.e.*, 'equal to') could be correctly applied to a group of players without that adjective's intending anything of the pejorative. While his performance

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was blessedly free of mugging or posturing or attention-getting gimmicks, Ellis Rabb might have hazarded to let himself go just a trifle further in playing the comedy of Alceste. It is unfair, of course, to compare him with Jean-Louis Barrault, whose company brought the original version of the play to town while the Theatre East group were still playing; but the more experienced actor was conspicuously less timid about letting the charm of his personality add an agreeable dimension to the role. On the other hand, the Acaste (Jean-Pierre Granval) and the Clitandre (Gabriel Cattand) of the French company did precisely what their American counterparts (William Ball and William Shust) might have been expected to do and happily did not: they hoked up their performances with exaggerated bows and much flourishing of feathers and along the way quite forgot to distinguish one character from the other. The Americans presented two neatly differentiated personalities, and neither allowed his dandyism and affectation to obscure the fact that he was also playing a human being. All in all, it was a heartening experience at Theatre East to see a great play performed with such straightforwardness and modesty. It is also disheartening to note that the experience was such a singular one.

Notes on Contributors *(Continued)*

GEORGE BARBAROW is a writer living in Topanga, California, whose stories and articles have appeared in this Review and other magazines.

MARVIN MUDRICK is working on a critical study of the fiction of Colette.

ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS has finished a new book, entitled *The Open Form: Some Studies in Literary Discord.*

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT will be teaching in the English Department of Barnard College during the next year.

EARL MINER'S book, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature*, is being published later in the year by the Princeton University Press.

JOSEPH KERMAN is to spend the next year on a fellowship at Princeton University.

B. L. REID is Assistant Professor of English at Mt. Holyoke College; he has just completed a book on *Yeats and Generic Tragedy.*

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GEORGE BARBAROW

Making Believe It is *Moby Dick*

It is probably fair to say that a significantly large number of the people viewing the recent *Moby Dick* picture have paid their way in for one of two reasons: some are shy in the presence of Great Books and feel guilty about lack of culture; and some always support any screen version of a Great Book or Great Play because they are aware of a vague potential of the cinema but can't stomach vulgarity, and the prestige of the original somehow guarantees something better. Both motives should be respected, for they are symptoms of aspiration, and proof of willingness to pay for a product of presumedly higher quality than the common run-of-the-pod motion picture. Polite respect is also due those moviemakers who, out of some inner compulsion, are willing to risk funds and hard work, to say nothing of reputation, in order to place a higher grade of products—certified by origin—within relatively easy reach of the aspiring viewers. It would be entirely unkind to suggest that all these motives have negative bases—revulsion against difficult reading, revulsion against difficult viewing, revulsion against the difficulties of inventing an original film—but, as in the case of the late *Hamlet* of Laurence Olivier, there is reason to lay aside initial impulses towards charity, in order to examine some esthetic suppositions upon which the entertainment itself is based. There has been sufficient praise of this *Moby Dick*, enough perhaps to tip the scale too far on the favorable side. A cooler estimation cannot fully redress the balance, of course, for time alone, aided by lapses of memory, is the final arbiter; nevertheless, recollection of the various fates of *Crime and Punishment*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *David Copperfield*, *Winterset*, *Our Town*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *Henry V*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, and other "literary" films, most of them heatedly praised and decently forgotten, is cause for some concern about the probable disposition of *Moby Dick* in the course of the years to come.

The most notable commitment in its favor has been made by the director-writer himself, John Huston:

> Sometimes, of course, one doesn't have to follow the original literally to remain faithful to the spirit. For instance—take *Moby Dick*. So far I've encountered only one person that did not approve what I had done with it—he is a rabid reverer of every line in Melville's book—and, while I respect his opinion very much, I do believe that my interpretation penetrates to the deepest parts of Melville. It emphasizes them and does not try to avoid any of them.[1]

There seems to be something about the book and the film that brings out symptoms of madness, although the alleged hydrophobia is probably only a figure of speech. Melville himself testified to the Whale's psychic *curative*

[1] From "An encounter with John Huston." *Film Culture*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1956.

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powers also, in that famous letter to Hawthorne: "I have written a wicked book, and feel spotless as the lamb." But penetration "to the deepest parts," if not also a figure of speech, is going it too strong. After all, this is a movie, of the peculiar type distinguishable as film-drama.

Film-drama, unlike distinctive structures (sonnets, tragedies, Westerns), is the amorphous result of the peremptory assumption that the cinema is one of the theater arts, whose mechanism displays "real" persons in "solid" space and "present" time. This audio-visual contraption is presumed to create an atmosphere not greatly different in character from the illusion of Real Presence induced in the course of religious ceremonies, although the movie communicants do not state their esthetic notions in supernatural terms. It goes generally without saying that motion pictures are entirely secular in nature. The crucial point is that "presence" demands a credulous attitude, whether the source be ritual or mechanical. This "presence" tends to evaporate in more or less direct proportion to the amount of rational discrimination the spectator applies to the spectacle; and it tends to exist more or less strongly in proportion to that spectator's willingness to suspend analytic judgments on the spot. Unfortunately, judgments suspended are judgments never made, especially where there is direct ephemeral appeal to the senses, the seductive appeal emanating from a series of photographs in natural colors, apparently in motion, and accompanied by appropriate sounds. In most cases, a spectator who accepts these persuasive images for what they purport to be (drama, persons, space, time) is a victim of stupefaction, not congenital stupidity, but the distinction is merely academic, for the result is the same. A drugged mind is a stupid mind, in the non-invidious sense that it is unable to distinguish clearly between an object and the manner of the object's conveyance. When the conventional assumptions of film-drama are taken for granted by moviemaker and spectator alike, and an artifact (a photographic image) is systematically treated as if it were "the real thing," esthetic murder is in the making.

Compliant to realist dogma, constantly drawing attention away from the composition and towards the subject, Huston's camera is competent, professional, passive, flaccid. Each shot has but one meaning, and insists upon being taken at face value. The whole series is like an album of excellent tourist snapshots. The viewpoints are typically chosen to provide quick and easy identification. Potential ambiguity is avoided as if it were plague. Overtones are non-existent in this pedestrian procession of "good likenesses," for what is an overtone but an extra meaning that would compete with the thing that is represented, and would force the viewer to think? Watching the present selection of scenes from *Moby Dick*, we take things as they come. This is a man. This is water. This is the whaling ship *Pequod*. This is a man with an artificial leg. His name is Ahab. He is the captain of the *Pequod*. Listen to Captain Ahab. He is explaining why he wants to catch the White Whale that bit off his leg. This is a whale. There she blows. The men are lowering the boats. Climb in the boat. We are going for a ride.

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There is a reason for the commonplace, bare, eye-level photography, and it is that any other approach to the material would inevitably call attention to the mode of communication, would make the pictures recognizably different from real, and would thus require, or at least invite, analysis of the images. Why is the camera aimed this way and not that? What is the reason for the particular distribution of light and shadow? What is the significance of this shot in relation to the others? The raising of such questions would thrust the cinematic process between the viewer and the actor, whose status would then be reduced to that of a photographed object; no longer acting, this "person" would be a thing acted upon. Now, the eternal hard fact of the matter is that an actor in any film whatsoever *is* such an object. It makes not the slightest difference how elaborate a pretense of reality is set up and maintained in a film, for this illusory reality is but a two-dimensional arrangement of reflected light; and the alleged humanity of the actor a delusion; and the supposed drama of film-drama a sham, a fake, and a fraud. These are unpleasant facts indeed, but their recognition is a necessary part of any useful explanation for the notoriously low state of motion pictures as an esthetic medium. Film-drama is the lone "art" form that depends upon false pretenses for its very existence; to defend it on the ground that the audience, actors, and director have all agreed to deceive one another and themselves, and thus do no real harm, is to condone a collusion. Indulgence in spurious drama is evidence that a group of people have collectively cut themselves off from analytical perception of imaginative patterns by placing naïve trust in machine-made evidence. In justice, it must be said that such damage as is done to the cinema is of the negative sort caused by errors of omission merely. The crime lies in the refusal to think.

Huston's methods are entirely consistent with the presumptions of film-drama, and it follows as a matter of course that " . . . we had to dramatize some of the narration, and aside from that, create dramatic situations." The picture is a chronological series of scenes wherein the familiar unities of time, place, and action characteristic of stage plays are scrupulously obeyed. The camera is smoothly subservient to the automatic conveyance of the scenery and the actors. The composition, or the viewpoint, or the duration of each shot is ruled by its simple function of transmitting the subject matter clearly and efficiently, and so these images do not possess formal values such as are characteristic of works of art in other media, where realism is a transient style, not a principle. The principle avowed and here conscientiously practised by Huston, demands humble, almost abject, self-denial before the awesome mystery of the Presence:

> It is a curious thing that so many people ascribe to me a distinct style. Believe me, I am not conscious of any such thing. Whenever I undertake to direct a film, I do so out of the deep feeling that it inspires in me. It is precisely this feeling that dictates the way in which I direct a

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> picture. It is a matter of spontaneous sensitivity. I direct actors as little as possible, and do not strive to impose a monotonous unity of style upon the whole . . . [2]

In this instance a preference for what seems "natural" argues a submergence of the artist's personality in the subject matter. The sincere aversion to "style" (overt visual distortion of the space-time continuum) probably comes from the habit of treating the camera lens as a clear window interchangeable with the human eye, but whatever the source, such a self-effacing approach is a singularly inappropriate substitute for Melville's way of attacking "the problem of the universe" in *Moby Dick*.

Melville seized upon "style" as if it were meat and he starving. *The Whale* is a stupendous collection of communicative devices: tones-of-voice, imitations, similes, inversions, exaggerations, metaphors, verse rhythms. If Huston's stricture may be up-ended, Melville steered around any possibility of monotony by an enthusiastic application of personal style, not its exclusion. And if at times the entertainment reads like rant, and seems at certain moments a shrieking babble of words, the intent is plain. Melville was out to release demons ("I am quick to perceive a horror"), and pointed directly at the unnatural, the fantastic, the unreal. The style is a kaleidoscope of styles, and the whole a rhapsodical phantasmagoria. The author's mother was a "Hagar", and he himself was a "wild" man (Genesis XVI: 11,12) who wrote a "wicked" book, and in the process pushed the devices of imaginative literature close to their breaking points. He sights Moby Dick almost at the beginning, fixing the monster with a simile,

> . . . the great flood-gates of the wonder-world swung open, and in the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated into my inmost soul, endless processions of the whale, and, mid most of them all, one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air.

And the identical simile serves Ahab, almost at the end,

> . . . he raised a gull-like cry in the air, "There she blows!—there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is Moby Dick!"

There is no need for a catalogue of quotations. Melville's extraordinary and powerful interpolations are justly famous. Suffice it to say that no page of the book is without its apparent incongruity, its amazing juxtaposition, its simmering overtone, its re-arrangement of the ordinary, its abnormal placement of commonplaces, its trick to stir up extra meanings.

The film-drama substitute for *Moby Dick*, constructed without conscious style, and thus without distinction, evokes no wonder-world at all. Symbol and simile, except for one or two shots of the gold coin and an utterly reprehensible reference to Bikini, are systematically sieved out of the visual portions of the show. Like a documentary film of the duller sort, it looks entirely factual and unimagined. The scenes "dramatized"

[2] Ibid.

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are simple derivations from the framing story of the book, and are played through in correct order by corporeal "people" in accord with the laws of gravity, perspective, and clock time, which are presumed to be the laws of motion pictures too. The treatment Huston gives *Moby Dick* is as thoroughly consistent with his earth-bound principles as it is inconsistent with Melville's penchant for intellectual abstractions.

The inhibiting rules of film-drama prevent camera excursions outside the *Pequod's* last voyage. Thus it is not possible to show how the whale "reaped away Ahab's leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field." Such a vision as this is automatically denied the Ishmael of the picture, who is a kindly, pleasant, puzzled young man, quick to perceive the obvious, and nothing else. In the book the nominal Ishmael is only an official device, and is instantly dropped in favor of the super-Ishmael whenever the author, following his fancy, wishes to hop about, back and forth in time, and here and there around the globe. A motion picture like Huston's, trapped in its dramatic framework, cannot bring to the screen any visualization of remote causes of action. Therefore, part of the striking passage,

> . . . for long months of days and weeks, Ahab and anguish lay stretched together in one hammock, rounding in mid winter that dreary, howling Patagonian Cape; then it was, that his torn body and gashed soul bled into one another; and so interfusing, made him mad . . .

appears in a conversation between Ahab and Starbuck, as if it were not absurd to think that a photograph of an actor speaking recorded words and looking a little strange could impress strongly upon the mind such a searing weld as Melville's. There is no way within the pitifully narrow limits of film-drama to present a gashed soul or a howling cape; no way to raise artistic omniscience to a level where Ahab and anguish could be bedded in a strait piece of canvas. Yet no film of *Moby Dick* could be worthy of Melville without containing these "impossibilities", and more.

The central problem is to find cinematic, as opposed to literary or dramatic, means to put on the screen a conflict of ideas, which is quite different from a conflict of personalities. The first step is to dispense with imitative reality, that chimerical hindrance to imagination. Perhaps the most efficient way to emphasize the break would be to turn the image upside down occasionally, by way of galvanizing the general complacency. To be faithful to Melville's radical spirit, the camera should unquestionably be used as a super-Ishmael unhindered by normal space-time conventions. This camera should be transformed into a roving eye capable of contrasts, parallels, and shocking comparisons. Melville's wonder-world is replete with ironies, perceived horrors, and synthetic inventions, and is at once magniloquent and magnificent in size; and it is necessarily abstract. An abstract cinematic pattern might not catch *The Whale*, but neither would it lumber so puffingly far behind as does the present exhibition; and it would certainly be difficult to make and difficult to look at, but we should never forget that "art is difficult" and so is *Moby Dick*.

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Reviews

MARVIN MUDRICK

The Life of Reason[1]

IN JANUARY of 1940, Pound the talent-scout informed Eliot of a new discovery: "Had a lot of jaw with Geo. Santayana in Venice, and like him. Never met anyone who seems to me to fake less. . . . In fact, if you were still an American I might propose a triumvirate." In February, Pound wrote Santayana—then in his seventy-seventh year—to pass along a publisher's enthusiastic commission (engineered by Mr. Eliot) for a "queer" book by Santayana, Pound, and Pound's not yet canonized London correspondent: "G. S., T. S. E., and myself on the Ideal University, or The Proper Curriculum, or how it would be possible to educate and/or (mostly *or*) civilize the university stewd-dent (and, interlineas, how to kill off bureaucratism and professoriality)." Four months later, correspondence between Italy and England, as well as the queer book, had become a casualty of the war; but that the notion should even have occurred to the two poets, and been conceived as appealing to the old philosopher, affirms their common persuasion of belonging to the same ideal community.

For this community, extraordinarily tolerant and diverse, Santayana himself had provided, at the turn of the century, a motto. "Intelligence," he had remarked in an early essay on another pair of poets (his contemporaries Whitman and Browning), is "the highest form of vitality." The motto, interpreted by an impresario like Pound, admitted multitudes. Santayana's distinction was to spend his very long life in heroically undeviating service to its narrowest interpretation, so that all human things—theology, morals, the arts, the round of daily living—were seen as inventions and functions of intelligence, as deriving from and constitutive of what for seventy years, without apology, he called "the life of reason."

The great word for Santayana is *reason*; which is order and the perception of order, in the universe and in the contemplating mind. He is as rationalistic, and as moral, as Dr. Johnson:

> The sole advantage in possessing great works of literature lies in what they can help us to become.

Santayana is in fact, like Dr. Johnson, a philosopher and (in no Chesterfieldian sense) a man of the world turning his incidental interested scrutiny and his power of generalization upon literature. His literary

[1] ESSAYS IN LITERARY CRITICISM OF GEORGE SANTAYANA, Selected and Edited, with an Introduction, by *Irving Singer*. Scribner's. $7.50.

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criticism is Johnsonian in its energetic meditated dogmatism, its unillusioned acceptance of the attraction and complex unsatisfactoriness of worldly things, its large (if at times chillingly suprahuman) survey of human motive; most strikingly, perhaps, in its capacity for entrusting the total force of a mature sensibility to aphorisms of such deliberate authority and amplitude as to illuminate at once the work of art and that unregenerate human nature which is its customary subject. So Santayana on the mind of Hamlet:

> Youth is far from implying less complexity than age or a meaner endowment, for youth, at least potentially, often has the advantage in these respects. Youth means only less complete adjustment of capacity to opportunity, of intelligence to practice and art. In a fertile mind such want of adjustment intensifies self-consciousness and, because so much that the mind is pregnant with remains unexpressed and untested, it produces a sense of vague profundity which is often an illusion.

Like Dr. Johnson (and unlike, say, Coleridge), Santayana is able to describe his author's view of human nature without seeming to pose for a self-portrait. The view may be Shakespeare's, of Hamlet; or it may be Dickens' view:

> When people say Dickens exaggerates, it seems to me they can have no eyes and no ears. They probably have only *notions* of what things and people are; they accept them conventionally, at their diplomatic value. Their minds run on in the region of discourse, where there are masks only and no faces, ideas and no facts; they have little sense for those living grimaces that play from moment to moment upon the countenance of the world.

Or Whitman's:

> He has accomplished, by the sacrifice of almost every other good quality, something never so well done before. He has approached common life without bringing in his mind any higher standard by which to criticise it; he has seen it, not in contrast with an ideal, but as the expression of forces more indeterminate and elementary than itself; and the vulgar, in this cosmic setting, has appeared to him sublime.

Whitman ("Men are to be vigorous, comfortable, sentimental, and irresponsible") is one of the two "poets of barbarism"—the other is Browning—about whose importance and limitations Santayana had already, within a decade of their deaths, arrived at judgments that our advantage of another half-century of perspective gives us no occasion to correct; for example, his mild account (which incidentally throws ironic light on Arnold's view of poetry as the millennial successor to religion) of Browning's alliance with one aspect of the Victorian *Zeitgeist*—

> The pathology of the human mind—for the normal, too, is patholog-

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ical when it is not referred to the ideal—the pathology of the human mind is a very interesting subject, demanding great gifts and great ingenuity in its treatment. Browning ministers to this interest, and possesses this ingenuity and these gifts. More than any other poet he keeps a kind of speculation alive in the now large body of sentimental, eager-minded people, who no longer can find in a definite religion a form and language for their imaginative life.

Browning, concludes Santayana,

remained in the phenomenal sphere: he was a lover of experience; the ideal did not exist for him. No conception could be farther from his thought than the essential conception of any rational philosophy, namely, that feeling is to be treated as raw material for thought, and that the destiny of emotion is to pass into objects which shall contain all its value while losing all its formlessness. The transformation of sense and emotion into objects agreeable to the intellect, into clear ideas and beautiful things, is the natural work of reason.

This aesthetic rationalism is not only unequivocal but deeply representative. It is Santayana's consistent position regarding literature and indeed all the arts: a position assumed in his last letters, in our own 'fifties, as in his earliest published criticism, in the 'nineties. That it helps to keep the arts clear of aesthete's cant, and close to life and mind, brilliantly appears in the exception Santayana takes to so distinguished an aesthete as Bernard Berenson:

Berenson surprised me by talking with juvenile enthusiasm about "art" (as if we were still in the 1890's). There is an exhibition of Paolo Veronese here [in Venice, 1939], where he said he was spending day after day rapt in wonder, and always finding fresh beauties in the pictures. I haven't yet been to the exhibition (I mean to go tomorrow: I am not *deliberately* wicked) but it is impossible for me now to regard "art," any more than traditional religion, as a supreme interest in itself. It is an illustration to history, and a positive joy when it really reveals something beautiful in the material or in the spiritual world.... I mentioned the constant pleasure I find in the light in Venice and in the aspects of the sky. "Yes," said he, "*they* were wonderful at catching those effects, due to the reflected light of the lagoon in the atmosphere. Paolo Veronese was supreme in rendering them." I thought of Titian and Tiepolo, but said nothing, because I don't really know or care who *painted* or who *saw* those harmonies most perfectly. Each probably saw a different effect, and painted it according to his own convention. What I care about is the harmonies themselves, which can't be had at second hand; they are strictly momentary and incommunicable. . . . It is lucky for B. B., in one sense, that he keeps the old flame alive; but I can't help feeling that it was lighted and is kept going by forced draft, by social and intellectual ambition, and by professional pedantry. If

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> he were a real poet, would he turn away from the evening sky to see, by electric light, how Veronese painted it?[2]

No life-evading aestheticism, then; the poet himself is least of all an aesthete, he "reflects" on "the passionate experience which he overlooks" from "the plane of universal reason," he sends us back to life "not unacquainted with speculation." The poet is an acute and superintending observer, and he is ultimately (in a sense never expressly circumscribed, but always decisive) a philosopher.

Santayana's first major work of criticism he entitled *Three Philosophical Poets*: the poets are Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe. The omission of Shakespeare is deliberate and crucial. One recalls what Santayana says about Shakespeare elsewhere: in the essay on *Hamlet*, a play he regards as a Gothic hodgepodge that manages, through the richness of its immersion in the tormented mind of the hero, to epitomize the European mind, torn between its Northern genius and its Christian-classical heritage, "between the fulness of life. . . and the depth and unity of faith"; in the essay "Tragic Philosophy," in which Santayana concludes that Shakespeare has no "philosophy" at all ("The Renaissance needed no mastering living religion"); in the very title of an early piece, "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare." His comments on particular passages in Shakespeare are invariably among the freshest and most enlightening we have, even after our half-century's logorrhea of Shakespeare criticism; but whenever the moment comes for summary and conclusion he shakes his head over Shakespeare's philosophical shortcomings: Shakespeare's world, says Santayana, is not "the cosmos" but "only the world of human society."

This inveterate philospher's bias is more often a strength. Santayana's sympathetic considerations of such cosmically systematic poets as Lucretius and Dante reveal large beauties of structure inaccessible to a more analytical criticism; and when, having carefully elucidated the moral issue of the Paolo-Francesca episode, Santayana remarks, "Only a sound moralist could be so tragic a poet," we are ready to celebrate the marriage, so frequently postponed or illegitimized, of art and high generalization. Nor is Santayana necessarily bemused by the *appearance* of system and magnitude: "Never before or since has a poet lived in so large a landscape as Dante; for our infinite times and distances are of little poetic value while we have no graphic image of what may fill them." This side-glance at Milton's yawning vacuities becomes, eventually, a direct examination:

> [The religious prophet] is hardly a poet in the ordinary sense, except in so far as (like Milton, for instance) he may owe a double allegiance, and be a profane poet altogether when he is a poet at all. Religion is often professed and intellectually accepted without ever having flowered in the soul, or being suspected to have any kinship with

[2] THE LETTERS OF GEORGE SANTAYANA, Edited, with an Introduction and Commentary, by *Daniel Cory*. Scribner's. $7.50. Pp. 341-2.

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poetry. It may have withered into a forced and angry metaphysics or semi-political party doctrine, poetically deplorable.

The opposite is the case in Dante. . .

If Santayana seems remote from the issues of modern criticism, if his fluent generalizations offend us in our wish for a tight grip on particulars, one reason may be that it has been a long time since Dr. Johnson, another philosophic mind whose every aphorism is grounded in the actual, whose abstractions have the weight and authority of the numerous particular awarenesses in life and art from which they spring and which they need not catalogue as evidence. Santayana is as unlike as possible the professional philosopher who reserves an amateur's interest in the arts (Professor Whitehead, for example). He is in fact like the artist, who tells us more than we know by allowing us to remember what we know.

Santayana does not impertinently prompt us. We are obliged from time to time, nevertheless, to recall that the quality and force of his generalizations depend (as with Dr. Johnson, the formidably independent air of his generalizations requires that *this* banal generalization be made) on the quality and force of his immediate perceptions, on the substance of his taste. Often the perceptions remain implicit; sometimes they are expressed, luminously; sometimes, expressed or otherwise, they yield precedence to Santayana's interest in the poet as philosopher, as maker or finder of a cosmos, irrespective of what Santayana might call at such moments mere technique or mere detail. His eulogy of Shelley, for instance, is symptomatic (and the obverse of his doubts about the less patently cosmogonic Shakespeare): "[Shelley's] was... the purest, tenderest, richest, most rational nature ever poured forth in verse."

If, however, Shelley gets the benefit of Santayana's predilection for cosmogonies, he is also treated to Santayana's occasional intellectual condescension toward art and religion, or at least toward those artistic and religious universes that subtract and simplify too much: Shelley, Santayana concludes, is one of "the masters of spontaneity, the prophets, the inspired poets, the saints, the mystics, the musicians," who "in their simplicity and abstraction from the world . . . come very near the heart," who "say little and help much," who "do not picture life, but have life, and give it." This condescension, too, is a fact of Santayana's temperament. It is liable to emerge, and to blunt or deflect the power of his immediate perceptions, whenever he is dealing with a mind he regards as philosophically inferior to his own. It appears in the essay on Emerson; more provokingly, in the famous essay on Dickens.

The latter deserves its fame, certainly, for pronouncements both favorable and unfavorable: "When people say Dickens exaggerates, it seems to me they can have no eyes and no ears"; "He needed to feel, in his writing, that he was carrying the sympathies of every man with him"; "he had . . . a warm fancy not aided by a thorough understanding of complex characters"; "He had a sentiment in the presence of this vast flatness of human fates, in spite of their individual pun-

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gency, which I think might well be the dominant sentiment of mankind in the future; a sense of happy freedom in littleness"; he "had so irresistible a comic genius that it carried him beyond the gentle humour which most Englishmen possess to the absolute grotesque reality":

> . . . in merciless and rollicking comedy life is caught in the act. The most grotesque creatures of Dickens are not exaggerations or mockeries of something other than themselves; they arise because nature generates them, like toadstools; they exist because they can't help it, as we all do.

From the height of his somewhat qualified admiration, however, Santayana resolves to make, after all, faults into virtues, Dickens into Shakespeare, and himself into a dilettante incapable of strong doses of reality:

> When I come to the death of Little Nell, or to What the Waves were always Saying, or even to the incorrigible perversities of the pretty Dora, I skip. I can't take my liquor neat in such draughts, and my inner man says to Dickens, Please don't. But then I am a coward in so many ways! . . . It is only courage (which Dickens had without knowing it) and universal kindness (which he knew he had) that are requisite to nerve us for a true vision of this world.

Dickens becomes the surrogate of the common man; in his presence the philosopher is troubled, for an instant, by a sense of unacknowledged obligations toward mankind, and, bending over backwards, concludes by standing on his head. But Little Nell is not Cordelia.

Little Nell, we say with the satisfaction of finding out the philosopher, is not Cordelia; the distinction, however, may at times be less important than we like to think. Santayana's condescension toward specific authors, as well as the perversities of judgment it induces, is not merely penitential or eccentric: it comes to appear, ultimately, as the blind side of Santayana's radical and abiding refusal to overvalue the arts. The arts are not primary, literature is not the Word from which proceeds creation. So Santayana insisted, through seventy years of devoted attention to *all* the phenomena of nature and of mind. And since the arts are not primary, Santayana knew how to answer a young admirer who had urged him to renounce metaphysics and consecrate himself to literary criticism:

> You know Plato's contempt for the image of an image; but as a man's view of things is an image in the first place, and his work is an image of that, and the critic's feelings are an image of that work, and his writings an image of his feelings, and your idea of what the critic means only an image of his writings,—please consider that you are steeping your poor original tea-leaves in their fifth wash of hot water, and are drinking slops. May not the remarkable sloppiness and feebleness of the cultivated American mind be due to this habit of drinking life in its fifth dilution only? What you need is not more criticism of

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> current authors, but more *philosophy*: more courage and sincerity in facing nature directly, and in criticising books or institutions only with a view to choosing among them whatever is most harmonious with the life you want to lead. (*Letters*, p. 196.)

Santayana offers, then, the corrective to those who glory in the fact that ours is an age of criticism. Not paradoxically, he offers us also, in this posthumous collection of the incidental labors of a lifetime, the most comprehensive, the most penetrating, and the most consistently satisfying text of literary criticism originated by any philosophic mind since Coleridge. And though the queer book to blast the foundations of Anglo-Saxon academicism was never written by Pound, Eliot, and Santayana, it may nevertheless happen that the two poets who eventually, for different reasons, lost faith in the value of "pure" criticism, and the old philosopher who had never lost his skepticism toward this casual avocation, will be linked together, by the academics whose efforts to instigate an age of scholarship or an age of criticism they deplored and fought, as the three outstanding literary critics of our language in our century.

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ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS

Queen or Handmaid of the Arts?

"REALLY?" SAID A LADY of my acquaintance, "a new book about criticism, eh?" And she riffled through it for a moment, glancing at neo-Longinian, entelechy, and homoioteleuton, at Einbildungskraft, synaesthesis, and their other playmates. "Oh," she said brightly; and "Ah"; and then, closing the volume with a snap, "How terrifying," she said, and put it aside.

Among literary productions which aim to terrify, works of modern criticism rate high; and two new histories of literary criticism, just in from the Departments of English and Literature at Yale University, may well rank supreme in this very special line of endeavor.[1] They are the first general histories of criticism since Saintsbury, and a lot scarier than anything that genial gentleman ever dreamed of producing. Yet a difference between them makes itself felt. Professor Wellek terrifies because he knows so many different particular things. Many of these things can be expressed only in fairly compressed and abstract language; but the vocabulary is not really formidable, nor does it try to be. The truly terrifying thing about Professor Wellek is that, at his most esoteric, he is obviously making a genuine effort to clarify and simplify his subject as much as possible; he approaches the reader with a full but open hand. Professors Wimsatt and Brooks, on the other hand, write a more involved prose and make use of a more choked dialect; even when there's a very adequate English phrase available, they like to transliterate the Greek, to glitter in a special vocabulary. And their command of the logical, the metaphysical gambits is formidable; from their first sentence it is clear that, expecting to be attacked from all angles, they advance to the fray in complete steel.

The deeper difference between the two histories is one of method as well as of purpose. Mr. Wellek, in the more conventional tradition of historians, is a particularist; with some necessary reservations, among the German idealists especially, he treats the particular critic and sometimes the particular book of criticism as a unit. He does not try to translate the welter of vocabularies into any common dialect; and while he indicates many inter-relations, cross-currents, influences, and similiarities, his work tends essentially to base itself on the Many and edge gradually and tentatively toward the idea of the Several. Professors Brooks and Wimsatt would not, I think, mind being called "monists"; they view criticism as having a separate, continuous, and comprehensible existence which need only be disentangled from the multitude of vocabularies to be clearly visible. Perhaps because their objective is half-pedagogic,

[1]A HISTORY OF MODERN CRITICISM (2 volumes of 4), by *René Wellek*. Yale University Press. $5.50 per volume. LITERARY CRITICISM, A SHORT HISTORY, by *William K. Wimsatt, Jr.*, and *Cleanth Brooks*. Knopf. $8.95.

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they seem not altogether remote from the Great Conversation idea—a notion familiar in its least graceful embodiment as the Chicago Syntopicon, an IBM-file of the human intellect. I hasten to add that they relate to this aggregate of flipped LCM's only as distinguished original to a low parody.

History is always a compromise between the inevitable confusion of events as they are experienced and the patterns made possible by distance and retrospect. Which is "reality"? The easy answer is "both", and it is a good answer, but conditional. For history is one of those arts, the rules of which demand that it look like a science; and criticism, like better arts, is one of those disciplines where a man contributes most fully to the general development by being most particularly himself. No witness, by mere right of perspective, can claim our credence for his view without submitting his proofs to the hardest of tests, the artistic. This demands a rare gift for seeing, at the same time, and sometimes in the same place, the freakish and the familiar, the exotic and the identical.

Be all this as it may, Professor Wellek has travelled far, and brought back much which is rare, strange, odoriferous, and medicinal. Much too of what he brings back for our delight and astonishment is fairly mangy produce; a great many ideas which are dead now, and others which were so from birth. It is good to know something distinct about Heinrich Wilhelm Gerstenberg, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, and Lisio Visconti; good to have Friedrich firmly distinguished from August Wilhelm Schlegel; good too to sense the richness of critical and philosophical speculation which lies behind such a shift in European taste as the romantic revival. But too much strained metaphysics, too many involved rationalizations, too complete a listing of obiter dicta, run the risk of leading us over the verge of antiquarianism. Professor Wellek walks with a firm step through these clouded groves. His sense of chronology is neat, he disentangles polemical exaggerations and momentary aberrations from the main tenor of a man's thought, he omits irrelevancies with a masterly, imperious hand, and he reads his authors thoroughly, from beginning to end. Yet there are stretches of his two superb volumes which resemble a splendidly organized desert. This is clearly not his fault; where there is life, he has brought back specimens, and where there is none, he has been obliged to report the fact. Still, his second volume is a good deal fuller than his first, and it will be interesting indeed to see him at work among the relatively rich flora and fauna of the last century.

His book is not, I think, to be read in parts or for its high points, though it will be enormously serviceable as a work of reference. The bibliographies, footnotes, and indexes alone provide a useful if not an indispensable springboard for almost any future investigator of 18th and 19th century criticism. But the real character of his work is slow, methodical, and irresistible. To dip into the disparaging chapter on Coleridge without looking into those on Kant, Schiller, Schelling, the brothers Schlegel, Jean-Paul, Solger, and the German background generally,

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would be to miss the grand, leisurely piecing together of ideas and idea-fragments which makes these volumes so meticulous a representation of historical fact. Precisely because the backgrounds have been so fully worked out, the climactic figures may not seem so spectacular as they appear in less compendious studies; but, in the end, we are naturalized to their thought by seeing its development; and "translation", above that minimum necessary to clear the air of completely private vocabularies, is obviated.

Because he is pretty well tied down, by the definition of his task, to the job of historical description, Professor Wellek does not spread out very widely into the implications and ramifications of his problems. There is little of that historical retrospect which enables one to see the use which I. A. Richards will some day make of a distinction originally adumbrated by Schelling and magnified by Coleridge. Historical back-and-forth is replaced by straightforward paraphrase and exegesis; and criticism maintains its distinct character as the criticism of literary performances, not general esthetics, epistemology, or—save the mark—metaphysics. This modesty of definition cuts down on the fireworks; but it gives one, by the piling up of many details, a full sense of the contours of each author's mind; and, in the end, a basis for distinct judgment which need be no less devastating because it is preceded by a full and careful comprehension.

The fact is, it is a piece of intellectual impertinence for this reviewer to pretend to sit in judgment on Professor Wellek's history. In this field, the farthest horizons I have are mostly those he has given me; to have one's intellectual vision widened and deepened in this way is an experience so rare and invigorating that gratitude automatically replaces criticism. For what it is worth, I have tapped and poked at the history from place to place, wherever a special eddy in my reading emboldened me to test Professor Wellek's observations. He has never failed to ring true. I daresay there are little errors of fact in his volumes; I am sure there are problems of multiple and alternate interpretation to be discussed and explored. But "modifying Wellek" will be a major activity for historians of modern criticism in the years to come; I cannot see that he has produced anything less than a classic.

The *Short History* of Professors Wimsatt and Brooks is indeed tiny—a veritable cherrystone among literary histories—only xviii+755+xxii pages. But it seems longer. Partly this is because it is choked with philosophical as well as literary ideas, which demand and get a very compressed and technical vocabulary. For another thing, the authors have a truly pedagogical way of seeking out and asking all the hard, and especially the abstract questions implicit in any literary situation; these questions make the reader stop and think. Sometimes he thinks about the answer to the question, sometimes about the question itself—occasionally about the man who asked it. Finally, the book seems long because Mr. Wimsatt (who is responsible for 25 chapters out of 32) is cursed with a thoroughly crossgrained, inelegant prose style. For all his occasional sparks of arch

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contemporaneity, he really pays no heed to the well-formed sentence or the neat structuring of emphases; and sometimes his sense has to be parsed out, one painful syntactic relation at a time.

> Neither encyclopedism nor the Saintsburyan gigantically conversational range has been our purpose, but a series of narrative focusses precisely on ideas (p. 9).

A sentence like this undoubtedly conveys a good deal about what the authors are trying to do; without quite intending to, it also suggests a couple of reasons why they often make pretty heavy going of it.

Though they introduce their book unpromisingly as "An Argumentative History of Literary Argument in the West," what the authors have actually written is something a good deal more reasonable than this description implies. With occasional variations into the purely historical approach, they have discussed some of the great cruxes in critical history—the unities, genius and the rules, imitation and poetic truth, poetic diction, the work of literature as cause and effect, the relation of the arts, the psychology of creation. The organization of these discussions is not always clear; the same topics turn up over and over, the same passages are quoted several times in support of the same point. It is not an economical volume at all. But though Brooks argues more than Wimsatt, neither one is dangerously polemical. Indeed, it came as something of a surprise to this reader when, on pp. 517-18, Professor Wimsatt drew up a "balance-sheet" of Crocean esthetics, and one discovered, suddenly, that certain of Croce's critical ideas were good and others bad. One had thought that, like Hegel and Schlegel, F., Croce had a philosophy which it was enough to understand. As for Professor Brooks, though he is the more combative of the two, and along familiar lines, he says little of Professor Ronald Crane and nothing of Professor Crane's *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry*. This is not only a tactful, it is a judicious omission.

Inevitably, a book of this character does a good deal of circling around the topics it discusses; especially in the earlier parts, Professor Wimsatt indulges in a quantity of intellectual calisthenics; and all the chapters are followed by short citations, representing points of view on the topic discussed—one is, apparently, supposed to twirl them around one's head, like so many Indian clubs, for the improvement of one's mental symmetry. Inevitably, too, the authors' sympathies are unevenly involved with the critical schools they describe. As one would perhaps expect, the historical and social school of criticism comes off worst; not simply in provoking the most violent opposition, but in leaving the authors least room for illuminating commentary. On the whole, this represents a deficiency of imagination, perhaps of security, in Brooks and Wimsatt. Taine and A. O. Lovejoy are no more a standing reproach to I. A. Richards and John Crowe Ransom than Euclid is a subversion of Shakespeare; the house of literature has many chambers. But perhaps it is too much to expect the narrowers of criticism to appreciate its wideners.

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The easiest of all lances to level against a Short History is, of course, the fact of omissions. Still, omissions, though inevitable, ought to be fairly apportioned. I feel the authors might have dealt more generously in this respect with traditional scholarship—might have mentioned, for example, the work of George Lyman Kittredge and John Livingston Lowes or Van Wyck Brooks; might have found space to say something about the great line of classical scholars which runs from J. J. Scaliger to Bentley, Porson, Wilamowitz, and Housman; might have pointed to the *OED*, the *DNB*, and even the *Short Title Catalogue* as humble triumphs of a certain definition of a useful literary task; might have told us something of Shakespeare's editors, from Theobald on down. A certain sort of critical function might even, on a generous accounting, have been recognized in Masson's *Milton* or Grierson's edition of Donne. But no; our authors are severely evaluative in their definition of criticism, and not without an air of piety which may prove trying. Henry L. Mencken is mentioned slightingly in the middle of a list on page 494, and never appears again; yet his *American Language* is a tremendous, pervasive critical fact, which, as long as we are assigning seven pages to William Empson, might have been mentioned in a footnote.

All this means, then, that the authors of the *Short History* are rather fancy and fashionable in their overall sense of literary values—are, in some respects, truly and strikingly uncritical. I think they suffer from a certain professional failing common to critics and historians of criticism; the more elaborate and wily the criticism (the more completely, in a sense, it transfigures the work of art), the better they like it. Yet I once heard of a chambermaid who was so superb at her task, so surpassingly agile and forehanded, that she made the house quite unliveable for the mistress of it.

If one considers their work as a textbook and testing ground for fledgeling critics of a specific function and perhaps a distinct persuasion, Professors Wimsatt and Brooks have produced an entertaining and useful document. It is not rigorous, by any means, as Wellek is rigorous; and the old-fashioned virtue of verbal accuracy is here and there in abeyance. For instance, on p. 688, line 17, the substitution of the word "lyric" for "drama" makes nonsense of an argument; on p. 316, Dryden is made to translate Du Fresnoy in 1795; a neologism like "comparatists" (p. 480) is not to be found in any dictionary; an artificial Latin plural like "decora" (p. 151) is pretentious; and in a footnote on p. 611 one reads, "From *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* by Sigmund Freud, copyright R 1948 Susie Hoch; copyright 1935 Edward L. Bernays," etc. Susie Hoch is a charming intruder, but the proofreaders should bow their heads in shame.

Speaking more largely, their willingness to interpret the facts more plastically than Wellek draws Wimsatt and Brooks into many questionable and disputable assertions. Much of this rashness is not altogether alien to their purpose, which I take it is to exercise the youthful judgment. But elsewhere—let a single example suffice. On pp. 233-34 one finds a

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paragraph developing the conceit that "the age of Pope witnessed a strange lag between poetry and theory—a success for poetry which consisted in its being a hundred years behind the most advanced theory." The reasoning behind this ingenious interpretation is that Pope uses many figures which are barely mentioned in Bysshe's *Art of Poetry* but which were described in Elizabethan textbooks. But, it is confessed, even Puttenham falls far short of providing "an adequate rationale of either Renaissance or Augustan poems of any sort." In addition, so far as we can tell, Pope never heard of Puttenham. So that what we have here is a case, not exceptional at all, of literary practice being out of touch with theory, both Puttenham's and Bysshe's—neither ahead of it, nor behind it, but independent of it. This is nothing "strange" or surprising. Donne's "Canonization" was as far out of touch with the poetical handbooks of the day, as Eliot's "Waste Land" was out of touch with the poetical handbooks of 1921. The fact that Pope's practice in one detail of his art coincided in some small measure with certain technical devices described by Puttenham was mere coincidence. A modern poet who makes use of "Ironia," "Paradoxon," "Synecdoche," or "Mezozeugma" is not for that reason three hundred years behind current theory; nor would be, even if current theory were totally silent on these topics. He might be two hundred years ahead of future theory; but even that assertion is meaningless. Did Homer somehow remarkably "anticipate" Puttenham by two millenia in making use of "the dry mock" and "the figure of quick conceit"? Who made Puttenham the center of the universe?

Clearly, it is the self-importance of critics which insists that literary practice is remarkable as it either does or does not live up to "the most advanced theory of the day." But if the most advanced theory is always some distance and often a great distance away from current practice. . . . However, here we verge on the heresy that criticism is a secondary and even a bastard art; and this will never do.

I sneer at criticism; and yet, really, nothing is more refreshing than a truly critical book; one which looks freshly into the heart of things, and without paraphernalia or self-importance gives one a sense of the live mind weighing and valuing experience in a supple, yet principled way. To this sense of living communication all critics naturally aspire; yet how often are their cries of enthusiasm and wonder muffled in the strange armor they feel obliged to wear! How complexly the mind which sets out to communicate delight and freedom becomes warped into the defense of a rigid system for obtaining it! Professor Wellek's account of Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder is a sort of music, a scholarly polka, almost; Professor Brooks' defence of formalist criticism is a dull sword scraped across a rusty helmet. Curious that the book which seems most humble in its estimate of criticism should be artistically so pure, complete, and satisfying; while the book which claims a high, almost an artistic role for criticism, should assume, without any real necessity, so forbidding an aspect.

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GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

Fiction Chronicle[1]

WORD HAS GOTTEN ROUND—Frank O'Connor is currently propagating it—that the Chekhovian story is the true short story, lyrical, indifferent to plot, and full of loneliness; the experience is the thing. Tale-telling has been relegated, officially, to Somerset Maugham, middle-brow and commercial; if a tale-teller should be really good, it is because he is a (polluted) Chekhovian. But there is a sort of narrative which is neither the "short story", of which the Russians, Irish, and Americans are the best practitioners, nor the tale, which is universal; this sort is impersonal, objective, hard of sentiment, unrelaxed, and undreamy; it is like an Icelandic saga told by a man of conscious and sophisticated intelligence. Not many writers have succeeded in this continental sort of story: Unamuno, Kleist, Mann, a few others. The reason for the scarcity, as I believe, is not that this kind of story is inferior to the other kinds or is inadequate to "reflect the problems of the modern world," not even that it is unfashionable, but that it is the hardest kind to write.

I would put Connell's detached, cool stories in this company. When you finish "Arcturus," one of the best, you do not find yourself for a moment speculating about the author's fantasied world, as in the case of Faulkner, nor about what a pleasant fellow the author must be, as with O'Faolain; you say to yourself, What a splendid story. Connell's world is *the* world, and his observations about it are the comments of intelligence, not of thesis. He does not identify, nor does he encourage the reader to identify, with any character. The people of the stories are others, seen meticulously and close-up, but not felt into. *Mirabile dictu*: you have to figure these people's motives out for yourself; they don't tell you, the author doesn't pontificate or even speculate, the story isn't craftily contrived so as to spring the motive up at you in the last paragraph. You have the impression that the author does not create these people at all, but only observes them. And his art is to arrange parts of the observed world in such a way as to let some of the wonder in. In "The Condor and the Guests" a Kansas businessman invites some of his Main Street friends to come admire the condor he has brought back from the Andes; I have no knowledge of how a condor bound by a long chain to a transplanted magnolia tree in Parallel, Kansas, would behave, but I find the way this condor behaves, as the way the guests behave, altogether credible; and

[1] THE ANATOMY LESSON AND OTHER STORIES, by *Evan S. Connell, Jr.* Viking. $3.50. THE FINEST STORIES OF SEAN O'FAOLAIN. Atlantic-Little, Brown. $4.75. PNIN, by *Vladimir Nabokov.* Doubleday. $3.50. THE WAPSHOT CHRONICLE, by *John Cheever.* Harper. $3.50. THE TOWN, by *William Faulkner.* Random House. $3.95. THE HOMECOMING GAME, by *Howard Nemerov.* Simon and Schuster. $3.50. THE ASSISTANT, by *Bernard Malamud.* Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy. $3.50. TUNES OF GLORY, by *James Kennaway.* Harper. $3.00.

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not because the condor is a symbol, but just because it is itself, among these banal people who are suddenly made preposterous by reason of the bird's presence. In "The Anatomy Lesson," wonder is let in by an eccentric old art teacher lecturing to his ordinary undergraduate students on the body, using a nude model for example—a theme so risky that part of the pleasure of reading the story is astonishment that the author pulls it off. Of the eleven stories in this volume, two are poor ("The Trellis" and "The Yellow Raft"), five are variously good, and four others (the three I previously named plus "The Fisherman from Chihuahua") are admirable.

O'Faolain's stories are warm and lyrical, and he does not hesitate in them to give you his own opinion on the way the world, Ireland especially, is put together. They are a beautiful mixture of the Chekhovian short story and once-upon-a-time, and only a partisan would complain of this; myself, I love it. This collection contains twenty-seven stories; whether they are, as the blurby title pretends, his twenty-seven finest, I do not know. A few are pretty soupy—winsome Irish lilt and hopeless love and The Troubles—but the average is high and solid. And the best are nearly, though not quite, as good as the best there are. The three I like most, "The Man Who Invented Sin," "The Silence of the Valley," and "Lovers of the Lake," all concern city dwellers spending a few days at some beautiful lake in the mountains; there, these ordinary people, monks and nuns, vacationers, adulterers, experience some of the wonder of the world profoundly enough so that they will not be the same again when they return to the tawdry city. O'Faolain's talents for story-telling, drawing character, and rendering a milieu are exceptional, but no greater than those of a number of lesser writers. It is his personal, lovely style and the warmth of his regard for his people that elevate these stories to an excellence worthy of the experiences with which they deal. Yet finally, I believe, they are somewhat vitiated by an excess of awe; for though awe is a noble emotion (and too little in favor these days), it is also a passive one. With too much of it, a self-conscious man, especially an Irishman, is likely to soften things at the end with charm or humorous irony or sentiment. (Sure, and it's a grand thing, awe.) O'Faolain is not only lyrical like Hemingway (whom, in the rather coy Foreword, he calls "the real man"), but he knows it and does not resist his lyricism; his contained melancholy reveals itself without the brittle breastplate of toughness; his song is as pure as Hemingway's, and there is more of it.

Pnin is a series of sketches none of which are short stories, though some were so published, and all of which hardly accumulate into a novel, though it is so categorized. But the book is worth reading partly because Timofey Pnin, a White Russian professor in a provincial American college, is a man whom it is delightful to be acquainted with, but more because of Nabokov's intelligence. Reading it is quite like listening to a raconteur who is also a great intellect. Pnin entertaining his former wife's

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son, Pnin made fun of by colleagues, Pnin with his White Russian friends, Pnin cleaning up after a party—both funny and pathetic, yet he is dignified by the author's affectionate regard for him; and the academic world he lives in is seen with sardonic energy—sentiment, comedy, satire in pleasing and wholly individual mixture. To be sure, the book is a diversion, but a mind as fine and active as Nabokov's does not sprawl when relaxing; it comments.

> Encouraged by his and his wife's protector, Eric evolved the ingenious idea (possibly not his own) of sidetracking some of the more plastic and stupid clients of the Center into a psychotherapeutic trap—a "tension-releasing" circle on the lines of a quilting bee, where young married women in groups of eight relaxed in a comfortable room amid an atmosphere of cheerful first-name informality, with doctors at a table facing the group, and a secretary unobtrusively taking notes, and traumatic episodes floating out of everybody's childhood like corpses. At these sessions, the ladies were made to discuss among themselves with absolute frankness their problems of marital maladjustment, which entailed, of course, comparing notes on their mates, who later were interviewed, too, in a special "husband group", likewise very informal, with a great passing around of cigars and anatomic charts.

Anyone who relaxes into sentences like these, I will read with joy anytime, anywhere, whatever his subject.

I am a Nabokov fan and have been for years, and I can appreciate it that some find *Pnin* rather light-weight for their taste. But his *Lolita*, published two years ago in Paris, is another matter: it is a masterpiece of a great comic writer. Neither the story nor the characters are comic: it concerns the perverse passion of a mature man for a girl of twelve or thirteen, the long tormented course of that affair, and its end in madness and murder. Yet the mode and vision of the *I*—an immigrant of mixed European origins, pseudonymed Humbert Humbert, with the prose style of Vladimir Nabokov—are such as to make you see double all the time, both the pathos and the absurdity at once. Then too, with that cataloguing exuberance of satire, the writer overwhelms us with accounts of the superficies of contemporary America as they come along, all given in language of unflagging liveliness and imagination. Commercialized America of the late 1940's has not been better seen. I do not think it *could* be better seen: a solemn account of its tawdry proliferation would be bathetic or merely indignant; it lacks dignity for tragedy; it is too important for contempt; there is too much of it and it is too vital for judicious abstractions; only (it seems to me after the event) a whacky, associative, far-fetching prose held from the merely fantastic by a painfully serious subject could do it justice. Reciprocally, without this perverse, propagandizing, energetic society to surround the story, the book would have deteriorated into one more chronicle of diseased love. In fact, there is an illuminating and devastating connection between this story of nymphetlepsy and the world it takes place in. All is corrupt but the author's

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vision, which is clear, comprehensive, and moral; and ours, which is comically double. The book should be published in this country immediately. (The last *Anchor Review* includes about ninety pages of it; but it is about 600 pages long and admirably unified; don't settle for less than the whole.) If it continues its present quasi-surreptitious existence, there is some risk that pornographers—those reverse alchemists who can transmute gold into lead—will give it a reputation as a dirty book, a misfortune for us all.

It is a pleasure to watch a writer increase with the years as Cheever is doing. For a long time his stories were amusing but trivial; even when their subjects were, or could have been, of some importance, his treatment was too playful to allow them to matter much. But in the past few years his stories have been getting more serious, without becoming solemn or less entertaining; and now his novel is not far from being really good. It chronicles the Wapshot parents and two sons, their loves and jobs and relatives, centering in their New England village near the sea but scattering to New York, Washington, and military posts here and there. No story, exactly, but a world of people all of whom, whether eccentric or humdrum, are seen as being in some respect wonderful. The technique of *The Wapshot Chronicle* is to assemble and arrange fragments of excellent narrative (parts have been published as autonomous stories) centered about the Wapshots, so that gradually you see whole people in a coherent world. The discontinuity and shifts of the narration multicolor this world with wonder—and true wonder, too, not a science-fiction sort of ersatz, startled awe. The book is by no means free of Cheever's old frivolity, both in subject and presentation. One of the sons scrambles stark naked across the roofs of an upstate castle seeking his fiancée's bedroom; splendid, but enough; it is frivolous of the author to overdo the size of the castle, making it stretch "for a quarter of a mile or more, shining here and there in the light from the distant dormer window like the roofs of a city." A powerful old cousin is being introduced to us (Cheever earlier has tickled the reader rudely by saying that one character was "unknown to the Wapshots as you are unknown to me"); suddenly, frivolously, he filches from her her autonomy as a character and from himself his dignity as the author: "It is not my fault that New England is full of eccentric old women and we will merely give Honora her due." Basically, though, the book is serious, comically serious, abundant with ordinary wonders, full of characters who scatter their seed, itself scattering seed, alive.

An aside. I first came across slivers of *Pnin* and *The Wapshot Chronicle* in *The New Yorker*, and was not very impressed by them. Somehow, even pieces by writers for whom I already had respect were altered in that ambience of luxury advertising. Not that Nabokov and Cheever were peddling $2.75 safety pins, even indirectly; but mixing one column of good fiction with four or five of My Sin and barefoot women in Borgana coats is like pouring Benedictine over a banana split, bad on the spirits. O'Faolain's stories I had seen only in one or another of those great-story col-

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lections which have an effect on their well-displayed diamonds not unlike that of a jewelry store, dazzling, sating, inutile. And Connell's stories I had come upon in the annual collections of Best or Prize stories, where a story may survive but will not prosper. If you have had such experiences with some or all of these books, do not be disheartened: contained each in its own volume as it should be, both the parts and the whole are a lot better than the dislocated parts were allowed to show.

The Town is a sequel to *The Hamlet*, and to my mind the best thing Faulkner has published in the seventeen years since *The Hamlet*. I always feel a curious reluctance to reënter Faulkner's imaginative world, and I should explain to those who are intimate with that world that what I mostly carry with me from reading Faulkner is images and an experience of words, and not at all the people, chronology, geography, or events of Yawknayawp County. I have no more interest in all that genealogy and the Civil War than I have in Lancaster-York and the Wars of the Roses. His famous style is too autonomous; to be sure, it can produce effects as magnificent as the thunderclap appearance of the bear in the story "The Bear"; but it is distressing to see him use these very tricks, as he often does, to inflate frog-sized anecdotes into parodies of bulls. More serious, he is often pretentious; he leads you short-breathed up to some dazzling, horrifying, healing meaning, which however turns out, when you get there, to be an emotional substitute for meaning; too much bourbon and bass drum revealing All—until the day after, when everything becomes confused again, except the memory of that boozy Boom Boom of revelation. I enjoy *The Hamlet* more than any other book of his that I have read (all the best-known ones except *Absalom, Absalom!*, which I have not yet been able to slog into very far); for, instead of moonshine, *The Hamlet* gives marvellous laughter, confusion-dissolving, redemptive, high but not drunken laughter. I began this new novel with my usual reluctance; however, it presently vanished, for *The Town* is short on Faulkner's vices and long enough on his virtues, though lacking the grand laughter of *The Hamlet*. The Snopeses move in on Jefferson, and Flem Snopes rises at the expense of all about him, especially of his own family. He is not just disgusting but dreadful, because he gains power, and Faulkner's hatred of him and of his threat to decency is proportionately greater, so great as to constrict the laughter in the book with fear and bitterness. In fact, his hatred and fear of Snopeses seem to prevent Faulkner here from making them very human. Mostly in his novels the characters are figures rather more than they are people with their own excuse for being; in other words, his world is more imaginary than realistic. But at his best these figures are rather less grotesque than the characters of *The Town*, and, more important, they have greater energy. Of the three points of view employed in the novel, the chief one is that of a constricted, ineffectual man, the next is that of a neutrally observing child, and only the third, the least important one, Ratliff's, can be called expansive in the manner of Faulkner's best comedy; genealogy is unobtrusive

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and clearly explained; no huge significances threaten; it does not, as *A Fable* did, fail into symbololatry. It is a medium-sized, pleasing novel not unworthy of its author's fame.

The plot of *The Homecoming Game* is much too important for the book's good. The personages are (all but one) well-drawn stereotypes appropriate to a comedy, and Nemerov's style is, as it has been in each of his three novels, agile and edged.

> At the party in the President's house was concentrated the real and unobtrusive power of the academic community, a small, select assemblage of *eminences grises* which made President Nagel himself feel uncomfortably like a flat figure on a weathervane, some emblematic rooster who faces with great authority, and seems to direct, the wind that turns him.

(Pity that Nemerov had the character *feel* that excellent simile.) There is the promise of that satiric burlesque which in his first and cruder novel, *The Melodramatists*, Nemerov demonstrated in a number of passages. But in *The Homecoming Game* so much energy seems to go into tooling the plot that little is left over for a better purpose. A history professor in a small college by flunking the football star disqualifies him from playing in the big game; the plot concerns the pressures put upon the professor to let the student play, the professor's moral trouble, and the complicated revelations of the student's reasons for failing this, as well as another, course. And it is pleasant reading for the plot's sake alone. But good plots well executed are not all that rare, nor, in themselves, of high value. The flesh this skeleton needed to become a full creature was, I think, either enormous grotesquerie (of which *The Melodramatists* gave us generous samples) or else a really incisive satire of the Huxleyan sort. However, academics do not, as a type, let themselves go splendidly and unselfconsciously, so that Nemerov's characters do not; worse, sometimes he treats them like novelistically true persons, especially another teacher in the same boat as the protagonist, and such realization is bad on burlesque. As for the satire, it is grinned away. Nemerov seems to be writing a light farce ("a sophisticated comedy," in Broadway language); then you become aware by indirections that he finds the moral confusions in the story quite painful; indeed, you sense finally that he finds them so painful that he winces from the severe task of excoriating them. The very energy which the protagonist expends on his small dilemma is supposed to suggest the magnitude of his moral confusion; but, instead of this oversubtle result, the book succeeds better at dissipating the author's pain at moral waste, by muffling a pee-dinkly problem in an involuted plot. In his fictions, long and short, Nemerov's pain at the outrageousness of things is too great to allow him just to entertain us, or even to irony it away; nothing will do this pain justice, literarily, short of direct confrontation of a substantial moral occasion. I think he could rise to it comically, satirically, or even both at once; I hope he gives himself the chance to do it.

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I have arranged the novels in this review (*Lolita* was not one of them, officially) in an ascending order of realism, for I think of prose fiction as having as its exemplar *War and Peace* (with all its flaws). A fictional world whose social and psychological laws appear to be the laws that rule the apparent world, people and deeds seen in clear daylight, all seemingly reported without the author's interference—this is *it;* and insofar as a novel is a romance, an autobiography, a Menippean satire (*pace* Northrop Frye), or anything else, it is impure. None of the four I have thus far discussed have intended to be pure novels, but these last two, *The Assistant* and *Tunes of Glory*, do so intend, and the last one makes it. This does not mean that I think it is the best book, though I liked it; I enjoyed *Pnin* more than any of the others, and I think *The Town* is the most considerable of the six; but *Tunes of Glory* deserves, in my estimation, special credit just for its purity of form.

In *The Assistant*, most of the characters are New York Jews. About the protagonist, Frank, we are told that he is an Italian-American and about his background we know only that he came from an orphanage where he had heard stories of St. Francis told by a priest. Malamud presents the Jews authoritatively: he knows their ways and their concerns inside out; his rendering of their speech, an Anglicized Yiddish, is authentic and delightful; and not for a moment do you doubt that they would have actually done what he represents them as doing. However, this Frank of his is neither an Italian nor a Christian but something vaguer, an American non-Jewish outcast; being only partly a created character, he can be made to do what the author wants him to do, as the Jews cannot. For the first two-thirds of the book or more, what Frank does is convincing. He tries to expiate his offense against a storekeeper by slaving for him; he falls in love with the storekeeper's daughter; he tries to improve himself; he tries to confess his crime. And all this is admirably done. But then gradually, though the Jews continue to be novelistic characters, Frank's desire to be accepted by the Jews and his concern to understand what Jews are spoil his quality as a character. Near the end, standing at the storekeeper's grave,

> Suffering, he thought, is like a piece of goods. I bet the Jews could make a suit of clothes out of it. The other funny thing is that there are more of them around than anybody knows about.

(Department of thoughts that never got thought.) In the last sentence of the book, with a shock to the reader that reverberates like a struck tuning fork, we are told that "at Passover he became a Jew." The novelistic motive for this act, that is, the sort of motive the book's Jews have been moved by, is to get the girl. However, by this time Malamud has built up a case for Jewry as being, in Frank's mind, a mystic society, the despised of men and the chosen of God. Now Frank is already one of the despised, but how does he or anyone else choose to be chosen? In actuality, to what degree can a non-Jew become a Jew? Malamud confuses and angers

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me with such doubts. I hope he sticks to writing ordinary, realistic novels hereafter, for at that I think he is first-rate.

Year after year, the British turn out pure novels, realistic, frightfully well-knit. I suppose there are dozens of British novelists now flourishing none of whom would so seriously flaw a novel as Malamud has done his. Yet I enjoyed *The Assistant* and I can't get through most of theirs. Charm, adultery, doing the right thing, gardens, good taste, rudeness, decency, consciousness that things used to be better—I hate to see so much craft expended on saucing these soft potatoes.

What a pleasure it is, then, to find that British economy and structural skill put to the service of a considerable subject—presenting a full-sized man. Kennaway is Scottish (though educated at Oxford) and the man he makes for us in *Tunes of Glory* is not polite; these are enormous advantages, being a non-English Britisher writing about non-polite characters, and Kennaway uses them most satisfactorily. The subject is a Scottish colonel, Jock, who had been a great officer in North African combat but who, years after the war, commanding a peace-time regiment, is deteriorating. The crisis comes from the conflict between this man, whom we come to know and love in a way that is managed admirably, and the new colonel sent to replace him. There is one stiff blow of melodrama; from which, however, the novel recovers with minimum damage. Kennaway's style is terse, good-humored, and vigorous, with wisps of Scottish poetry drifting in from time to time.

> The dawn was like an afternoon; the day seemed to break with an immense regret. There were no bright streaks dramatic enough for an execution; but it was a prisoner's day, dull and without birds.

The texture of realism proper to this sort of pure novel is never violated. And Jock himself is loved, by his men, by the author, by the reader, in the way an heroic man must be loved, warts and all. It is a slight book, limited but accurate in its aim, pleasing both in its promise of things to come and in its present accomplishment.

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R. W. FLINT

Skinning the Phoenix[1]

TEN YEARS' acquaintance with Lawrence has pretty well convinced me that Leavis, for all the weird excesses of his zeal, is essentially right about Lawrence's interest and quality. The question of his relative rank is something one would like to postpone for a while, a long while, until some of the battle smoke clears. Six months with Leavis's book has worked a change in my estimate of it similar, on a small scale, to Leavis's own thirty years' experience with *Women in Love*. He admits having suffered Murry's outrageous hatchet-job on that book without protest when it first appeared. Lawrence is clearly one of those over-protected mammals, like the porcupine or the skunk, whose good nature takes time to discover. His case is daunting but not hopeless, the chief difficulty being how to prosecute it with anything like his own essential good humor. As long as he is pushed down our throats as a sort of moral and spiritual castor oil, so long will he be justly ignored.

His own nature had such flamboyant extremes of febrile excitability, Keatsian *complaisance* and Tolstoian mobility, all uniquely exposed, that the usual first response is to find his sensibility too great for his intelligence to handle. He also seemed to attract a rather meaching, humorless group of satellites (who more aware of that than he?), with the honorable exceptions, of course, of Huxley, Frieda, Douglas and Catherine Carswell, when much of his irritability vented itself in fine, sardonic Swiftian gusts. We recall his arrival at Witter Bynner's New Mexican house, his emerging from the taxi and dashing to the ground, to the horror of the tender-hearted Bynner, a Florentine ikon that Frieda had induced him to carry across from Europe. This was Lawrence's Carlyle side, redeemed for the novel by a much finer nature and talent than Carlyle's. There is the equally comic but less gratifying side illustrated by the fracas between Mabel Dodge and Frieda as to whether Lawrence was to be allowed to sunbathe *à deux* with Mrs. Luhan on her Taos rooftop. The critic's job is to grasp Lawrence in both roles, often so confusingly simultaneous, as pawn of fate and as master of fate. Joyce at least managed always to appear master of the situation, *le grand écrivain Européen* in the Turgenev tradition. Lawrence to his death was often the victim of his own ambitions. This submergence in event and temperament provides the challenge that Leavis has, on the whole, handsomely met. When Lawrence died, Huxley had already done half the job when he wrote that "This special sensibility was accompanied by a prodigious power of rendering this immediately experienced otherness in terms of conscious literary art." Now Leavis does the other and vastly more difficult half.

[1] D. H. LAWRENCE, NOVELIST, by *F. R. Leavis*. Knopf. $4.75. THE DARK SUN, by *Graham Hough*. Macmillan. $4.50. THE LOVE ETHIC OF D. H. LAWRENCE, by *Mark Spilka*. Indiana. $4.00.

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D.H. Lawrence, Novelist appears, at first blush, to be the most messily bloody crossroad in many years of criticism. Can we help being repelled by this air of monumental Byzantine court intrigue? Are we ready to lay down our lives for a mere *filioque*? Can we, in sum, join a battle that lines up Flaubert, T.S. Eliot and Joyce on the side of death against Lawrence, with the Great Tradition squarely behind him, on the side of life? Well, obviously there is no ready answer, apart from taste and experience. But at least I can say that the valuable matter in this book detaches itself the more completely from the polemical side the more one reads it. Nor does it really overestimate the opposition, which Leavis fights in the grand Miltonic style. Anything worth saying is worth exaggerating, said Johnson, and, as if to counter the dangers in this maxim, Leavis quotes Lawrence with a fullness that makes his book the harder to read for all the many changes in pace and mood. It is, to be sure, an earnest, blocky sort of book, recommending lightness, speed, grace and wit with an often elephantine emphasis.

How can one *recommend* humor in a writer like Lawrence? All the best modern novelists are full of it. Their work, in some vital sense, might be said to be floated on it. But since it lies so near the quick, it becomes a sort of sacred bond between the novelist and his true initiates, scarcely to be promoted by the novelist himself and only clumsily promoted by his critics. The same is equally true of Life. Leavis is weakest, I think, in putting Lawrence exclusively under this banner. No critic has unconsciously made it clearer how normal we have come to regard the elegiac strain in contemporary literature, the celebration—satiric, affectionate, bantering or tragic as the case may be—of life against the background of an idealized past, or a past seen in its best light against a present seen in its worst. What could be more natural in modern Europe? How else explain the French canonization of Faulkner and their apparently docile acceptance of Eliot's fantastic summary of Lawrence in the *N.R.F.* of May, 1927:

> L'oeuvre de M. Lawrence n'est jamais troublée par l'humeur, le gaîté ou le persiflage, aucun diversion politique, théologique ou artistique ne vient nous distraire. . . . Rien ne nous soutient, sauf l'évidente sincérité de l'auteur. M. Lawrence est un démoniaque, un démoniaque simple et naturel muni d'un évangile. Quand ses personnages font l'amour—ou du moins accomplissent ce qui chez M. Lawrence est l'équivalent de l'amour (et ils ne font pas d'autre chose)—non seulement ils perdent toutes les aménités, raffinements et grâces que plusieurs siècles ont elaborés afin de rendre l'amour supportable, . . .

Alors, basta! Nonsense can have no more elegant refinement. One can see Valery chuckling over his *fines*. We must merely note, as Leavis does, Eliot's gesture of reconciliation, though not of recantation, in his foreword to Father Tiverton's book. Leavis seems to be particularly impervious to the charms of elegiac fiction, whether in the extraordinary lyric radiance of Joyce's *The Dead* or in the way Flaubert's genius for life and presentment conquers his famous chronic disgusts. This is too bad, but not really

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fatal. Though it makes me uneasy to find Life itself—as a proposition in cultural metaphysics—at stake in relative judgments of art. We want writers, do we not, free to "reject" it ultimately, in the manner of Sophocles' choruses or James's letters, as a bad business altogether? We want as much room in the canon for *Komm' süsser Tod* as for *The Vicar of Wakefield*. The issue goes deeper than our reaction to one or more of Lawrence's doctrines. He often does present himself as the chosen prophet of Life, whether in the Nietzschean mode or in the Schweitzerian. But where the idea of life runs such a gamut, what does it really amount to for a reader of fiction? Not much, I think. What *is* striking, after long immersion, is that Lawrence has as much of the "Slavic" complicity with life as the "Germanic" habit of categorizing it. He was right to tell Jessie Chambers that he had an "horizontal" sensibility.

If Lawrence is a great novelist and Leavis our best critic of fiction, the contact between them produces, in addition to some first-rate formulations, some definitions *aere perennius*, that unsettling overplus of emotion we find in the relations of some of the men in Lawrence. But it would be cutting off our noses to spite our faces to dismiss either of them on this account, or to miss the immensely vital, harmonious world that lies between the extremes. Leavis is distinctly not Middleton Murry.

Graham Hough, Harry Moore, and Mark Spilka have done the necessary work of clearing Lawrence of the charges of unwitting homosexuality, proto-fascism, satanism, megalomania and impressionism inherited from the Eliot-Murry era. That each of these charges has some minor local truth makes the job no easier. We go to Leavis for bigger things. On Lawrence's general intelligence his words seem to me final:

> Lawrence's 'insights' were a matter of being able to see what was there, as only genius can, and they went with an extraordinary power of relating insights, and not only of understanding situations comprising elements difficult to get at and recognize, but of understanding whole comprehensive and complete fields of experience. His thinking, in fact, is so much superior to what is ordinarily called thinking that it tends not to be recognized for thinking at all.
>
> There is no profound emotional disorder in Lawrence, no obdurate major disharmony; intelligence in him can be, as it is, the servant of the whole integrated psyche. It is the representative in consciousness of the complex need of the whole being, and is not thwarted or disabled by inner contradictions in him, whether we have him as artist, critic, or expositor. It is intensely active in his creative writing: we have on the one hand the technical originality of the creations, and on the other hand their organic wholeness and vitality.

But what of the weaknesses, especially of language, that sometimes infect such relative masterpieces of organization and presentment as *Women in Love*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *St. Mawr* or *The Fox*? Why can Lawrence never achieve the unity of impression of *The Dead*? Leavis courageously, if reluctantly, faces up to this:

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Yet, though he was supremely intelligent, with the intelligence that manifests itself in a rare degree of self-knowledge, clearly his peculiar experience of emotional forcing, strain and painful readjustment had some lasting consequences that made it very difficult for him to be sure of his poise and centrality as a reporter on some of the most delicate problems his genius drove him to explore.

So we do, after all, have to make almost the same degree, if not the same kind of allowance for Lawrence that we make for Joyce. The mere *idea* of life, puffed up by repetition and the use of such color words as "subtle", "dark", "great", etc., is by no means always easy to distinguish in Lawrence from the real thing. Joyce's intellectual acumen resulted at times in what might be called over-organization, in the admitted longueurs of *Ulyssess* and *Finnegans Wake*. Lawrence's "organic" intelligence could not entirely overcome a weakness inherent in his effort to approach civilized life with the broad, open frontal attack of a Tolstoi. Lawrence, like Yeats, draws on our deepest faith in the power of imaginative writing to overcome circumstances and temperament.

What, then, about the "poetical" passages, so effective in the moon-breaking scene in *Women in Love* and so trying in *The Plumed Serpent*? As Mr. Spilka ably shows in tracing the flower pattern in *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence could knit up his work in the large metaphorical scheme usually admitted as the legitimate kind of "poetry" in fiction. Flowers especially have the unvaryingly numinous status in Lawrence of symbols in Symbolism. We have also a kind of thematic play—dialogue is too mechanical a word—that Spilka outlines under the rubrics of "tenderness", "touch", "lordship", "brotherhood", "separateness", etc. But what of the hackneyed charge of "impressionism"? (If Lawrence often composes with many short strokes of heightened color, he also, like a Manet or Cezanne, composes by ellipsis, foreshortening, dramatic contrast and monumentality.) The usual reaction to the sex rhapsodies, for instance, is not that they are indiscreet (though one must honor Evelyn Waugh's opinion that "To write of someone loved, of oneself loving, above all of oneself being loved—how can these things be done with propriety?"[2]) but that he was hypocritical and humorless, the puritan vices. One remembers Lawrence's ferocious chastity apart from Frieda and Frieda's sabbatical underwear. But here a choice is required. Could we have had Lawrence's powerful anatomies of love without his celebrations of sex; and did he not, in his tenacious, single-hearted concentration on its ability to sustain relationships, extend the limits of beauty, interest and wisdom in the novel in certain necessary directions? The cost is obvious, but perhaps not the gain. Edmund Wilson, in *A Piece of My Mind*, still calls Lawrence's sex "hysterical" and reminds us that people copulate to have children. Yet he admits, at sixty, to being sometimes "as if drunken with the aftermath of love"; to which any true Laurentian could only say "bravo!" and ask what objective choice there really is, aside from prejudice, be-

[2] *Tactical Exercises*, Little Brown, 1954, p. 182.

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tween Lawrence's "hysteria" and Wilson's drunkenness. If Lawrence's novels make a world complete in itself, why should it not contain what Wilson admits to be a major part of life? Let us be reasonable about this if we can; and allow Lawrence's many caveats, qualifications and decencies to make themselves felt. The art is wiser than the artist. He is usually after the relationship rather than the pure emotional state. The problem of this incantatory writing is both very simple and very complex. Enjoyment of it rests on taste, but *appétit vient en mangeant;* because these passages are not by themselves crucial and have no more weight (nor any less) than the other kinds of writing in Lawrence. They celebrate, explore and define relationships but do not by themselves attempt to create them, and are likely to be stronger in the stronger novels, weaker in the weaker.

Finally, on the main agenda, Lawrence's alleged "demonic" destructiveness, Lawrence the Tacitus of Bloomsbury and the parasitic upper classes. Here, of course, there is more bias than Leavis, wholly sympathetic with Lawrence's views, is interested to admit. Lawrence felt an unthinking tenderness towards his father that gradually revealed itself in letters and conversation, and for Jessie Chambers's father and brother, as she recounts it, greater than he felt for anyone else. That he drew heavily on the "dark" energies of the Midlands—its patriarchal domesticity, its Biblical rhetoric and its grudging *Waffenstillstand* with the higher classes—would be too obvious to mention had not Eliot quixotically chosen this as a ground for ridiculing him. Lacking space, I can only refer the reader to Leavis's and Hough's able treatment of this disagreeable question. "The only door Samuel Johnson of Litchfield ultimately found closed to him was Lord Chesterfield's. It is Lord Chesterfield who is generally held to be the loser. And Herbert Lawrence of Nottingham soon found that he was able to move, geographically, socially and intellectually, pretty well where he liked" (Hough). Educational snobbery will never entirely down. The feeling will always remain that if a man can be brought, at an early enough age and in suitably Horatian surroundings, to read a classic or two in the original language, his character will be permanently sweetened. That this is mostly bosh I should think the example of Dante had sufficiently proved. At the same time we have to grant the immense benefit that Joyce drew from his Jesuit education. It was the genius of both novelists not to *flourish* their educations in any offensive way. Let critics follow suit.

Lawrence certainly had a bent for destruction equal to his creative insight. Mr. Hough asks whether or not he was a "tragic" writer; and in muffing the point rather badly, I think, shows how meaningless the question is when asked of a twentieth century novelist unless our notion of tragedy is freed for the purpose from its bondage to Classical and Renaissance conceptions of heroic character. As a tacit recommendation to the modern novelist to create *ersatz* heroes, it is merely vicious.

Graham Hough's book has better manners than the Leavis, is cooler in tone, but is not thereby necessarily the better first book for students.

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His opening chapter wobbles a little in its point of view and I found his concluding chapter on "The Doctrine" rather lame. But much of his close discussion is rewarding in the questions it raises. This kind of book, literately skeptical but untainted by any of the grosser prejudices, is what we need. For fuller biography one must go to Harry Moore and Aldington.

Mark Spilka, like Mr. Hough, works within the Leavis dispensation without quite attaining to the beatific vision. He seems to be an American disciple of Father Tiverton, one of the Christians, if I am not mistaken, "who would use Lawrence's stream to turn their own mills" (Hough). "So Lawrence is almost a Christian, after all" (Spilka). No great harm in this, though my mind boggles somewhat at his prophecy of a Lawrence-inspired "Church of Life" preaching the joys of "phallic marriage". Surely Eros must be trusted to cook his own soup. The phallic cults of antiquity don't seem to have promoted much in the way of literature or art. Perhaps there is a real confusion here, and Mr. Hough is right in saying that Lawrence can't get close to Christianity without standing it on its ear, however much he may refresh our sense of life, communion and ritual.

How to conclude, except to hope there is no conclusion more important than thanks to Mr. Leavis for leading the criticism of Lawrence out of the swamps into clear and exhilarating country?

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EARL MINER

Traditions and Individual Talents in Recent Japanese Fiction

THESE BOOKS[1] have been so warmly received that it seems unnecessary to blow a fanfare of welcome at this date. Most of the reviews have, however, either treated the novels in isolation or have related them to cultural or personal concerns which have little to do with Japanese fictional modes. So it may be useful to let the cultural and biographical dust settle a bit and consider what literary traditions and individual accomplishments these books represent. Many of the essentially Japanese qualities of these books are, of course, beyond any Westerner, but in the case of three of them, Western fiction is a legitimate point of departure.

There is little of the West in the mature art of the two greatest contemporary Japanese novelists, Tanizaki Junichirō and Kawabata Yasunari, however. After periods of experimentation, they have modelled their styles on the two most important Japanese fictional traditions—Tanizaki on the classical *monogatari* style represented at its greatest in Murasaki's *Tale of Genji* (c. 1000), and Kawabata on the highly imagistic and compressed style of Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693). These two traditions differ from each other considerably but have common qualities which distinguish them from Western fiction, and which I shall try to define after discussing the novels separately.

Tanizaki is a novelist of states of mind and attitude which are developed bit by bit in plots where time seems to float by. As in reading *The Tale of Genji*, we must constantly add and subtract—this person's thought to that character's action, this woman's attitude from that man's conversation. Like Joyce's manicuring God, the author has retired and sits Buddha-fashion with tucked-up legs in unperturbed reflection. What is truth? or what has really happened? we ask. For a reply, we must look at the *presentation*, at Tanizaki's "The Mother of Captain Shigemoto" (Keene, pp. 387 ff.), for example. Narration is laden with "as though," "but," "however," "as if," "it is not clear," "were probably," and hosts of conditionals and subjunctives—Mr. Seidensticker's skillful equivalents of the elusive aspects and moods of Japanese verbs. Whether Tanizaki's

[1] THE SETTING SUN, by *Osamu Dazai*, translated by *Donald Keene*. New Directions. $3.00. SNOW COUNTRY, by *Yasunari Kawabata*, translated by *Edward G. Seidensticker*. Knopf. $1.25. THE SOUND OF WAVES, by *Yukio Mishima*, translated by *Meredith Weatherby*. Knopf. $3.00. ZONE OF EMPTINESS, by *Hiroshi Noma*, translated from the French by *Bernard Frechtman*. World. $3.95. MODERN JAPANESE LITERATURE, compiled and edited by *Donald Keene* with translations by various hands. Grove. $4.75. Japanese names in the text of this review are given, unlike here, in the Japanese fashion, surnames first. Page references to MODERN JAPANESE LITERATURE are cited as Keene, in parentheses.

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characters are macabre like Captain Shigemoto's father, sensual like Kaname in *Some Prefer Nettles*, or commonplace like the sisters in *A Dust of Snow* (see Keene, "The Firefly Hunt," pp. 383 ff.), we feel less what they do or say, than what they are or seem. We can see the very essence of this art in a few sentences from "The Firefly Hunt."

> The events of the evening passed through Sachiko's mind in no particular order. She opened her eyes—she might have been dreaming, she thought. Above her, in the light of the tiny bulb, she could see a framed kakemono that she had noticed earlier in the day: the words "Pavilion of Timelessness," written in large characters and signed by one Keido. Sachiko looked at the words without knowing who Keido might be. A flicker of light moved across the next room.

To say that the meaning of this event is only the lustre of the commonplace in a seeming timelessness is to mistake Tanizaki's art for preciosity; the world is also a pavilion of splendor lovingly created in his rich details of experience, the past, and art. When Knopf issues his *Dust of Snow* (*Sasame-Yuki*), we shall appreciate more fully both his style, formed over the years on Poe, Baudelaire, and the *Genji*, and his great if often complexly Japanese humanism.

If Tanizaki persists in a fluid extension, Kawabata enters his characters so completely that he seems to disappear in a dramatic intensiveness reminiscent at times of Dostoevsky; but he remains completely impersonal, as even Saikaku does not. In "The Mole" (Keene, pp. 366 ff.), for example, the drama is that of a woman whose life and relations with her family and husband have been shaped and changed by her habit of fingering a mole on her right shoulder. Her words are couched as a sort of diary meant for her husband's eyes and tell the history of the mole and what it has meant in her life. This is an incredible basis for a short story which conveys a woman's life and essential femininity with complete conviction, but it is just this quality of consuming immediacy without intimacy which Kawabata achieves so unsurpassedly.

Snow Country is far greater in sweep, technique, and style, however. "The Mole" has much of the intensity, but little else, of this novel and of the Saikaku tradition from which Kawabata derives his most fully realized art. One of Saikaku's chief subjects was human passion, and his technique an almost unbelievably imagistic style. Kawabata has the same *haiku*-like style of reduction to image become symbol which makes each detail verge upon the emblematic. There are three main characters to the story—Shimamura the sensualist, so precious that he is finally overwhelmed by his senses, Komako the geisha who lives by wasting her love on him, and the friend and rival, Yoko, who is a soft echo of Komako. The novel ends with Shimamura overcome by life: he is shocked into unconsciousness when Komako rushes from a burning building with Yoko's all but lifeless body in her arms.

Snow Country was written at different periods between 1934 and 1947,

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and its surpassing beauty grows out of this unhurried, considered art. The novel is divided into two parts, corresponding with Shimamura's two depicted visits to the snow country. At the beginning of the second part, Kawabata places Shimamura in Tōkyō, shows the solicitude of his wife—thereby stressing by implication his culpability for infidelity—gets him back to the resort in the snow country, and suggests the time of year in two short sentences:

> It was the egg-laying season for moths, Shimamura's wife told him as he left Tōkyō, and he was not to leave his clothes hanging in the open. There were indeed moths at the inn.

This polished style glows in a perfected structural setting. The novel opens and closes with similar scenes. It begins with Shimamura on the train observing Yoko as she attends to the sick Yukio and savoring her with a vague pruriency which amounts to wondering who she is and whether he will possess her. The novel ends with him overcome by the the sight of her mangled body and still unsure of her identity or of his relation to her. Part One begins and ends with Shimamura's impressions on a train journey. Part Two begins with the image of a moth, "a spot of pale green . . . oddly like the color of death," an anticipation of Yoko's dying state at the end of the novel—which is in turn parallel to the death of Yukio at the end of part one; and their deaths represent Shimamura's gradual spiritual dissolution in the course of the story. These are merely the most obvious of the many structural motifs in the novel, so that the question is rather one of its meaning than of its formal beauty.

Mr. Seidensticker writes in his Introduction that the theme of the novel is the impossibility of love in an earthly paradise, but I find this reduction unsatisfying. The novel is surely founded upon a contrast between Shimamura's precious sterility and Komako's immediate vitality. While on the train to visit the snow country, he bends and straightens the forefinger of his left hand, that part of him (symbolically?) which so sweetly, achingly remembers Komako. She is repeatedly bathing and tidying, is described in terms of images of light and red, and is shown in sudden impulses of action. What she represents is best revealed in the symbolism of the Milky Way at the end of the novel. Kawabata alludes to a *haiku* by Bashō—

High above the raging sea
In an arch afar to Sado Island
Streams the Milky Way—

where the Sea of Japan is the same sea near the snow country. What the Milky Way symbolizes here and throughout is clear from four passages which I quote somewhat out of order. Shimamura sees the Milky Way come down

> . . . just over there, to wrap the night earth in its naked embrace. There was a terrible voluptuousness about it. Shimamura fancied that his own small shadow was being cast up against it from the earth.

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> The Milky Way spread its skirts to be broken by the waves of the mountain, and, fanning out again in all its brilliant vastness higher in the sky, it left the mountain in a deeper darkness.
>
> [Komako] seemed to have her long skirts in her hands, and as her arms waved the skirts rose and fell a little. He could feel the red over the starlit snow.
>
> As he caught his footing [in stumbling toward the fire scene], his head fell back, and the Milky Way flowed down inside him with a roar.

The last sentence ends the novel. Komako and the Milky Way are one; both represent the superior life and beauty which overcome the sterility of Shimamura: some sensualists "by aromatic splinters die," but he drowns in an excess of life. Komako tragically wastes her vitality on him, but tragic waste is also tragic exaltation in fullness of being. She has lived. Like Tanizaki, Kawabata affirms life, but life as passionate vitality rather than Tanizaki's patterns of tradition and subtle shades. These two great writers in the two important Japanese fictional traditions complement each other perfectly.

Two assumptions generally inacceptable to Tanizaki and Kawabata underlie the work of Noma and Dazai. These writers believe that modern Japan is part of an international scene and that the Japanese novel must adopt Western modes and techniques. Noma's *Zone of Emptiness* chooses Naturalism as its instrument to proclaim that the rigidity and waste of humanity characteristic of military organizations make the soldier's life a "zone of emptiness." What the novel does best is to create that terrible consciousness that nothing, absolutely nothing, the individual can do will right the military wrong or give air to the suffocating spirit of the soldier. Insofar as it is a naturalistic program novel, it is a protest against Japanese re-armament, but its real effect is the conviction it carries that the militaristic temper is a mortal threat to humanity.

It would be pleasant to say, as one cannot, that the novel is an artistic success. It is too slow, too long, and vitiated by flashbacks which, as they come to add nothing, grow only tiresome. The strength of the novel lies in its first half or so; thereafter, the deadening army routine lends too much of its monotony to the novel itself. When the plot finally begins to move at the end—as the hero is unjustly shipped out to certain death—action is no longer convincing. Moreover, the occasional and silly mistransliterations are but symptoms of a falsifying artistic removal imposed by the double translation from Japanese to French to English.

Both Mr. Keene's translation of Dazai's *The Setting Sun* and the novel itself are of a different and superior order. Dazai successfully merged two Western traditions in a work dealing with postwar Japanese social and moral dislocations—the French tradition of Flaubert and Mallarmé with the English late Romantic tradition of D. H. Lawrence. The nonchalance with which he borrowed situations, character, and theme from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is remarkable. Kazuko, a girl from the postwar, im-

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poverished nobility finds no way to achieve individuality or even live in a society which is "rotten"—Lawrence's very word. Like Lady Chatterley, she ends by taking a lover from the lower classes in order to have a child by him. There are further resemblances between the two novels, but *The Setting Sun* is more remarkable for its differences in handling the materials. Lawrence ends, as a proper romantic novelist ought, with marriage. Dazai does not. Lawrence's most powerful and most credible "character" is sexual passion, the Life Force. Dazai's human characters and theme both excite belief—or at least a willing suspension of doubt.

A willing suspension of hostility is perhaps more like it. Kazuko's brother Naoji is far gone in decadence, like her stolid but nonetheless un-Laurentian lover, Uehara, who is a fake besides. With such characters, the theme of the novel must lie in Dazai's resolution of Kazuko's motives in having such an affair. Essentially, her act is what she calls a "private revolution" in which the rebels become willing victims who create standards of love in the face of a hostile world. She writes Uehara:

> Victims. Victims of a transitional period of morality. That is what we both certainly are.
>
> The revolution must be taking place somewhere, but the old morality persists unchanged in the world around us and lies athwart our way. However much the waves on the surface of the sea may rage, the water at the bottom, far from experiencing a revolution, lies motionless, awake but feigning sleep.

But the resolution of the theme also entails a French artistic cleanness, a complete lack of sentimentality reflected in Kazuko's remark about herself and her unborn child—"A bastard and its mother." This unblinking realism is an older wisdom than Lawrence's romantic vision, just as the form of the novel is superior to his meandering plot. The denouement reveals that, unknown to either of them, the fine Kazuko has had her affair with the worthless husband of the good woman whom the decadent Naoji had idealized in frustration. These and many other parallel lines meet at the end when Kazuko realizes that an anguished love can bring beauty into the inimical world. Her love is depraved by social standards which themselves are corrupt, but Kazuko learns that depravity may mean tenderness in a world where it is the only avenue to love. The addition of French honesty to Lawrence's Life Force of mystic regeneration turns his abstract Passion into the more fully human motivation of love. The result is a splendid artistic whole and a new formal perfection in Western-inspired Japanese fiction.

Dazai shares with Lawrence, however, the plaintiveness of a minority report of great eloquence, the defensiveness of a viewpoint diverging from "the truth of the human heart." Mishima, the author of *The Sound of Waves*, seems much more healthy and athletic in spirit. He took up exercise to strengthen a body as frail as Dazai's, and this struggle for health and a symmetry of mind and body—with the belief that it may be obtained—gives his writing its feeling of energy in repose. The feeling of

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potentiality, of the writer of epic abilities writing a pastoral novel, marks this young writer whose classmates called him "the divine child" and were aroused when in his teens he wrote a novel dealing with the amours of the Heian court. From this early fascination with Japan's classical past, he turned to study Kawabata's technique, and in recent years has devoted himself to studying Western fiction. Of the writers before us here, only he seems equally at home in his own tradition and in an international culture.

Mishima has dealt with a variety of subjects and forms but shows no compulsion to write the Great Japanese Novel. *The Sound of Waves* is an acknowledged attempt to see what can be made today of the style of Daphnis and Chloe. Like Longus, he mingles affection for his idyllic characters with the condescension which a mature person must feel for innocence based on ignorance. The out-of-the-way fishing village is a perfect locale for such an idyll, where realism and intelligence may half suspend their weightier claims while Shinji and Hatsue fall in love and are separated by a villainous uncle who finally relents and lets them marry. Mishima's skill emerges in his handling of the environment, tone, and his skillfully adjusted point of view. And in the *paulo maiora* of the innocent disrobing and fire-leaping of the lovers in the lighthouse we have a sense of the literary power which Mishima holds in reserve for stories of greater scope. Perhaps his *Kinkakuji* (*The Burning of the Gold Pavilion*), which won an award as the best novel of 1956, is a step toward full expression of his mature powers.

Mr. Keene's *Modern Japanese Literature* contains selections by other authors in the traditions discussed here and many by many writers who represent such diverse schools as the romantic, the proletarian, and the symbolist. The most compelling stories, apart from those already named, are Higuchi Ichiyō's "Growing Up," a late nineteenth-century study of children which anticipates the selection from Mishima's *Confessions of a Mask;* the first decent translation of Natsume Sōseki in English, the hilariously rendered first chapter of *Botchan;* "The River Sumida," a beautiful evocation of the passing of a way of life; Yokomitsu Riichi's disturbing allegory, "Time"; and Dazai's "Villon's Wife." There are several other stories of quality and interest in addition to some dull plays and a considerable variety of poetry.

These five books seem to me to have a significance beyond their individual accomplishments, rich as those are. The fact of their appearance in a literary English is extraordinary—one cannot help but admire and applaud the postwar generation of translators that has succeeded Mr. Arthur Waley so happily. The question of just what these many excellent translators have to give us has, I hope, already been partially answered in terms of the novels' individual significance; but one struggles to define what it is about Japanese fiction that differs from our own and therefore can contribute most to our artistic experience. There are perhaps a few things which can be said briefly.

To begin with, it is extraordinary that these novels can affirm, even in

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translation, the importance of style—*The Zone of Emptiness* by exception through its double translation, and *Snow Country* by a texture as rich as poetry. Second, these novels declare the function of taste in the Japanese tradition as a mode of apprehending and shaping experience. By taste I mean the ability to evaluate "the object as in itself it really is," but without Arnold's emphatic moral sense. But if taste may be opposed to moral preoccupation, there is indeed a moral passivity about these novels—and most Japanese art—which has troubled a Ruskin in the past and will continue to upset Westerners who desire authors to suggest moral judgments or create characters more completely good or bad. The best and most characteristic Japanese fiction tends to accept, recreate, and esteem the esthetic particular and to avoid such issues of abstraction as conflicts between Good and Evil or Body and Soul (as opposed to good or evil protagonists). This leads to the third conclusion, that the Japanese go from the quasi-formal and particular realm of taste to what may be called metaphysical ultimates in ways different from ours. Our literature tends to alter or affirm life by making decisions in the way of poetic justice, but Japanese taste functions selectively and affirms by appreciation. The relation between this selective taste and metaphysical ultimates is established, I believe, in three ways which can only be named here: by a monistic treatment of materials, in which artistic judgment is exercised over a whole including man and nature, thought and action—poles for us but almost a single entity to a culture with a Buddhist heritage; second, by a narrative point of view which is at once closer to the materials and less omniscient—the air of "this is what things seem to have been"; and by a different concept of time which I can describe in brief only imagistically as the sensation for the reader of observing a traveler on a river-boat who observes now himself, now the shore, and now the river of flowing time—a merging of patterns of motion and stasis relative to each other. However, these random conclusions put an awkward intellectual superstructure upon many examples of fiction which often defy generalization and which certainly can be appreciated with far less self-consciousness. These stories are, after all, less the products of a foreign tradition than individual works of art which promise to give pleasure for many a reader and many a reading.

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JOSEPH KERMAN

Auden's *Magic Flute*

Postscript to a Bicentennial

W. H. AUDEN AND CHESTER KALLMAN have taken the bold, right tack and say so at the very start: "Probably no other opera calls more for translation than *Die Zauberflöte*, and for a translation that is also an interpretation." Their version of *The Magic Flute*[1] is at once a superb job of translation for music and a striking, intimate critique of the opera as drama. It was commissioned by the NBC Opera Theater for the two-hundredth anniversary of Mozart's birth, give or take a fortnight; at the moment it looks like one of the main contributions of the *Mozartjahr* to Mozart, also one of the best things yet to come out of the television industry. The production was lavish, earnest, and as artistic as a 24-inch opera stage would let it be.

The printed text includes several indifferent poems not intended for the stage, or perhaps we should say, the tube. There is a Proem, and a long Metalogue which has Sarastro discourse in genial heroic couplets about Mozart and the modern age. Then in a Postscript addressed to the Translators, the Queen of the Night damns their point of view, rejects a number of their prized innovations, ridicules their diction, and questions their very motives. Indifferent or not, this written-in review has given the present reviewer a depressing sense of superfluity, making it impossible for him to proceed except in a circuitous, hangdog fashion.

So he will first have a stab at *The Sea and the Mirror*, Auden's "Commentary on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*," remarking on the evident analogies between *The Tempest* and *The Magic Flute*. Each play combines metaphysics and low comedy in a fairyland inhabited by disembodied Spirits and informed with the particular magic of music. In each the Princes are led through educational trials while the Princesses progress out of naïveté, under the guidance of a good magician. Monostatos, though a lay figure, is quite parallel to Caliban; paternal Sarastro is sufficiently close to Prospero; especially the lovers are strangely alike in their relationship, although Mozart develops his more fully. Masque and Masonic ritual interrupt the more conventional dramatic flow as "musical" elements in structure. More seriously yet, something of the permeating poetic mood seems common to these two late, last dramas.

Auden's commentary, however, is not Shakespeare's play, and for Auden dramatic criticism is secondary to a critique of all the world that's a stage; Prospero the mage, Shakespeare the poet, and God the Creator are all under review. In Caliban's magnificent speech Auden plunges to

[1] THE MAGIC FLUTE, English version by *W. H. Auden* and *Chester Kallman*. Random House. $3.50.

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the heart of the problem in his most articulate, not to say loquacious, analysis of the nexus of Night and Day, art and life, mirror and sea, superego and id. Caliban is "the distorted parody" of the unconscious, son of the Queen of Love, art's enemy "who does not rule but defiantly is the unrectored chaos"; Ariel is the spirit of reflection in the mirror held up to nature. Caliban worries this brilliantly. He specifies the existentialist dilemma prefigured earlier in the poem by Antonio; he suggests the Christian solution which lies behind Auden's existentialism, and which finds more central affirmation in the companion poem *For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio*. Prospero as he returns to Mantua finds himself unable to reconcile to Caliban or Ariel. But as a Postscript the two of them come together in a sad echoing lyric, which incidentally is placed in the poem as a whole with a perfect sense of musico-dramatic form.

Auden draws another, more novel dualism: between Prospero the learned manipulator, enormously conscious of himself and of his ultimate failure, and Antonio the simple doer, unanalytical, unsympathetic, with the plain strength of awareness of his condition which is his aloneness. Prospero is necessarily presented by means of a lengthy self-analysis, Antonio by means of two pages of shrewd observation, plus a series of sardonic refrains. This second dualism is perhaps the finest element of this fine poem—perhaps because it is less purely metaphysical than the other, and is set forth more dramatically, in terms of persons rather than harangues. Certainly we have not seen the last of Antonio the existential man; Auden's latest libretti with Chester Kallman, however, bring back particularly the crux of Caliban and Ariel.

The Sea and the Mirror is not much concerned with the lovers, with Ferdinand's quest or Miranda's maturing. The dramatic form appropriate to such themes was provided by *The Rake's Progress*, and indeed Hogarth's framework, which is said to have been suggested by Stravinsky, encouraged Auden to devote himself to the quest more whole-heartedly than in any work since *The Dog Beneath the Skin*. *The Rake* has doubtless been sufficiently hashed over in this magazine. In an illuminating essay George McFadden has shown, in effect, how Auden here turns towards orthodox existentialism; while for my part I continue to regard the conclusion of the opera as unfulfilled dramatically, however consistent philosophically. Perhaps this failure has to do with the fact that in *The Rake* Auden practically let lie his preoccupation with Night and Day and the saving Christian hope—this in spite of the presence of the Devil and of Baba, who represents "the it," in Sellem's words (Mr. McFadden brings this out). As will be evident in a moment, for Auden the conflict of Night and Day has to form the metaphysical matrix for the quest.

The themes come together in a second opera libretto by Auden and Kallman, *Delia, or A Masque of Night*,[2] which so far has not been set to music. This once again is a derivative work, a complicated rewriting of George Peele's *The Old Wives' Tale*. Peele's play is a marvelous little con-

[2] *Botteghe Oscure* XII, 1953, pp. 164-210.

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fusion of romance material, riddles, rustics, and grand guignol. As a setting, Gammer Madge is made to tell the tale to some sophisticated peasants, between sunset and sunup. Delia has been bewitched by the magician Sacrapant, who requires her for the maintenance of his youth and power, symbolized by a light in a glass which may be broken only by "one that's neither wife, widow, nor maid." Delia is sought by a succession of questers: her two brothers, less talkative than in *Comus*, a pair of comic knights parodied from Ariosto, and by Eumenides, whose good deeds to the rustics gain him the fantastic support of Jack's Ghost. All are assisted by Erestus, who has some prophetic power—no doubt as compensation for his enchantment by Sacrapant into a bear by night, an old man by day. It is finally Erestus' financée who breaks the glass. Eumenides' supreme test comes when Jack's Ghost, who has been promised half of all that Eumenides gains, demands his fair share of Delia. But he stays Eumenides' sword, and all ends well.

Auden makes this over to be as much like *The Magic Flute* as possible. There is now only one suitor, Orlando, the enamoured, who gains Delia only after a fairly arduous educational journey. Half of Erestus lives in Bungay, a comic bear-man who bears a strong resemblance to Papageno the bird-man—at least to Auden's Papageno, at least to Auden's Papageno with a Xantippe wife. The other half of Erestus lives in a new character, a Crone "gathering hips and haws" to whom Orlando gives alms. She guides him to Delia with good counsel which he cannot quite follow; it is then she who makes the supreme demand of Orlando, that he marry her instead of Delia. But when he kisses her, the Crone releases him from the vow, revealing herself as

The Lady of the Green
Of Night and Elfland the high Queen
Whom some Diana, some Dame Nature call,
Of all that live wise Mother original...

She engages in several central agons with Sacrapant, a much more conscious person than Peele's figure, or than Sarastro. By an elaborate riddle proposed by the Crone and solved by Orlando, Bungay, and Xantippe, the mage's light is extinguished. But as Bungay steps out of his bear-skin and returns to Xantippe, as Orlando goes off with Delia, the Crone relights the lamp with a kiss:

Child of my sorrow, through this day
Take your rest while rest you may;
Soon, too soon, will set the sun
And our wars be rebegun...

The libretto closes with a morning chorus for woodland animals ("Day breaks for joy and sorrow") exactly parallel to their sunset chorus near the start. One can practically hear the musical echo, the repetition, the daily renewal of wars.

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The themes come together, as I have said, but do not really engage. While cosmic forces clash around them, Orlando and Delia work out their limited destinies without understanding Sacrapant or the Crone. Unlike Tom Rakewell, Orlando does not "go it alone," and from the libretto one might be tempted to judge him a somewhat indefinite hero. Delia seems duller yet. But of course no judgment can be made until the libretto is set to music; this is an important point. So far we have only an incomplete work, and it is precisely in the area of the consciousness of the leading characters that the music is going to be most powerful and decisive. All that can be said now is that the librettists have provided enough incident and enough occasions for self-expression; so harmless a line as Delia's "I begin to understand . . .", placed as it is, might become as extraordinary as Anne Trulove's "He loves me still" or Pamina's "*Tamino mein, o welch' ein Glück!*" It is apparent, in any case, that *Delia* is a virtuoso piece even by Auden's standards, the verse exuberantly intricate and archaizing (referring to the century from Ariosto to Peele), and the structure fantastic in its ingenuity, demanding a rapid succession of very many small musical numbers. Echo songs, rounds, and so on are wittily imported from Peele. How well this could be set by Stravinsky.

Delia has been worth describing at some length because it makes so clear Auden's intention with *The Magic Flute*. Like *Delia*, *The Magic Flute* "combines two themes, both of great interest. The first and most basic of these is the story of the change in relation between the Dionysian principle and the Apollonian, Night and Day . . . The second theme is an educational one: how does a person discover his vocation and what does the discovery entail?" These two themes are indeed of great interest to Auden. Only their presence, one imagines, made the poet willing to submit to the shackling incumbent on an opera translator, even if he is to be something of an "interpreter" too. For in an opera that is already made, the dramatic articulation is fixed in the music and inviolable. To alter the musical expression is to distort the opera; with the musical numbers all that can be allowed is to shade the effect slightly by modifying the meaning of verses substituted for the German. To be sure, with the sections of spoken dialogue between the musical numbers, which exist on an altogether different imaginative level, Auden and Kallman may legitimately (and do) change Schikaneder's libretto as radically as Peele's play. With this difference: precisely because the imaginative level in these sections is so low relatively, modifications do not make an essential difference.

In *The Magic Flute*, as in *Delia*, the dichotomy of Ariel and Caliban is dramatized for the stage as the conflict between magician and queen. The Princess abducted by Sarastro is actually the daughter of the Queen of the Night, who has therefore an added interest in guiding the Prince to rescue her. But whereas in *Delia* we see a fairly benign Queen gain control, in *The Magic Flute* we come in at another stage of the unending cycle. *Delia* is a Masque of Night, *The Magic Flute* an opera of sunlight and day. The good Sarastro is in ascendency, and it is he, not the Crone,

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who abdicates to necessity—at least according to a spoken addition of the translators:

Now my task is almost done:
When tomorrow's rising sun
Sees the Queen of Night's defeat
Shall my mission be complete,
And in that victorious hour
I must also lose my power . . .

The words, of course, are nearly Prospero's. "Though the Queen must be defeated in order that the New Age may come, her defeat completes Sarastro's task: he must now hand on the crown to Tamino and pass away like Prospero in *The Tempest*."

Sarastro and the Queen are seen to be indissolubly bound together, opposed but also interdependent in a cyclic relationship. This explains the easy commerce between their respective kingdoms, and accounts for many well-known "inconsistencies" of the libretto: that the Kingdom of Light and Truth should harbor a Monostatos—whom Auden's Sarastro addresses quite as Prospero addresses Caliban; that the Three Spirits seem equally at home in the realms of Night and Day; and that the audience is asked to switch sympathies from the Queen to Sarastro between Acts I and II. Without any question the metaphysical basis of *The Magic Flute* is much clarified in this version, perhaps fully rationalized for the first time.

But in what sense is this theme "first and most basic"? The point, I take it, is not what Auden thinks or what one of his reviewers happens to think, but what we can tell of Mozart's opinion. And Mozart was more attracted to the "educational theme," to the progress of Tamino and more particularly to the progress of Pamina. Probably he found this better suited to music, as well as personally more congenial; in any case he made his position plain by involving the music more crucially with the lovers' journey than with the wars between Night and Day. Musical involvement defines the central action of an opera. Unfortunately the translators have managed to modify this central action by changing the order of certain musical numbers.

Not that one doesn't sympathize with their concern about the illogical arrangement of the second act. Something is clearly wrong with the plotting, and various revisions have been proposed since Ernst Lert's interesting book *Mozart auf dem Theater* of 1918, if not earlier—either in order to restore Mozart's "true intention" or else more frankly to patch things up. In Mozart the sequence of events is as follows:

Pamina is attacked by Monostatos ("*Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden*")
she is saved by her mother the Queen, who gives her a dagger and threatens her with a curse unless she uses it on Sarastro ("*Der Hölle Rache*")
she wavers, but Sarastro kindly comforts her ("*In diesen heil'gen Hallen*")
she is rejected by Tamino, and grief-stricken ("*Ach ich fühl's*")

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she is comforted again by Sarastro, this time in company with Tamino (the Trio)
she tries to kill herself with the dagger, but is saved by the Three Spirits (Finale)
the final epiphany as she joins Tamino for the Ordeals.

Auden's rearrangement:

Pamina is rejected by Tamino, grief-stricken ("*Ach ich fühl's*")
she is comforted by Sarastro, in company with Tamino
she is attacked by Monostatos
she is saved by her mother, who gives her the dagger, etc.
she wavers, but Sarastro kindly comforts her
she tries suicide
the final epiphany

"It does not seem natural that, having seen Pamina fall into Tamino's arms at the end of Act One, she should appear, when we see her next, to have forgotten his existence. Secondly, the effect of Monostatos and her mother upon her would be a much greater temptation to suicidal despair if she had to endure them after she imagines her lover has deserted her rather than before, when she could console herself with the thought of him and even call on him for help and guidance. Thirdly, we wished to make her appearance in the Finale with a dagger more plausible and more dramatic."

But there is a decisive argument against the rearrangement—much more decisive than the one objection to it raised and dismissed a little facilely by Auden, namely the disturbance of Mozart's system of key-relationships. The change spoils the essential dramatic rhythm of Pamina's progress. Her trials must increase: from frightening advances by Monostatos, to vicious behavior by her mother, to rejection by Tamino, to despair, to suicide attempt. This rhythm has been pre-defined *musically* by Mozart; if anything is musically certain, it is that Pamina's great aria "*Ach ich fühl's*," so striking in its expressivity by contrast with the rest of the opera, comes as a late climactic ordeal for Pamina, not as a first one. The rather silly girl whom we see fall into Tamino's arms at the end of Act I could never summon up that kind of feeling; after her preliminary sufferings, yes. We need not doubt that Mozart was perfectly aware of the confusion in the libretto, and we need not suppose that he was cynical enough to set just anything, however rushed he may have been. The libretto did allow Pamina's trials to increase, however, and as this was central to the play that Mozart wanted, he composed it accordingly, and did not worry about inconsistencies.

The gloomy truth is that Auden's rearrangement of the musical numbers is going to militate against the practical use of his version of *The Magic Flute*, a version so admirable in other respects. The whole record of Pamina's development has been weakened, and weakened in a way that is rather disquieting. At approximately the place where Mozart has a lyric, emotional climax, Pamina's aria, Auden substitutes a verbal,

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mental climax—Sarastro's final clarification of the nature of his relationship with the Queen. The Prosperan speech comes here; the aria is shifted back out of the way. To replace musical effects by literary ones is to distort Mozart's piece and to go against the nature of opera. It is exactly at this point, and only at this point, that Auden's very free treatment of his original material becomes inadmissible.

It is idle to speculate, I suppose, but I cannot help wondering how much was deliberate policy. Enthusiasm for the metaphysical theme may very well have made the translators careless of the human theme, and made them miss the force of what Mozart was actually doing. Moreover, the undercutting of Pamina is rather characteristic; there has been something unsatisfactory about all Auden's heroines within the framework of the quest. Rosetta of *The Age of Anxiety*, who seeks alone, is the best realized, but both Anne Trulove and Delia suffer from their treatment as symbols of their male's quest rather than as people in themselves. This is not the way Mozart treated Pamina. (A composer may help Delia, but Stravinsky could not altogether save Anne.)

Missed what Mozart was doing, or mistrusted it? Years ago Auden asked in the name of Orpheus

What does the song hope for? And the shy hands
A little way from the birds, the shy, the delightful?
To be bewildered and happy,
Or most of all the knowledge of life?

The answer was no hope on either count. More recently faith in the Quest Musical still wavers in "The Proof," a poem included (with exact propriety) in the section "In Sunshine and in Shade" of *The Shield of Achilles*:

But Tamino and Pamina
Walked past its rage,
Sighing O, sighing O,
In timeless fermatas of awe and delight
(Innocent? Yes. Ignorant? No.)
Down the grim passage . . .

and they

. . . opposed its spite,
With his worship, with her sweetness—
O look now! See how they emerge from the cleft
(Frightened? No. Happy? Yes.)
Out into sunlight.

What is most of all lacking is any sense of Mozart's knowledge of life; the poetic music, to my ear, proves nothing. Yet even Antonio, self-certain and alone, tough, cynical, un-lyrical, knows

given a few
Incomplete objects and a nice warm day
What a little music can do.

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Some such trust, surely, however flecked with doubt, has to support any serious work with opera, whether in composition, performance or production, libretto-writing, translation or critique.

A word in appreciation, finally, for this version of *The Magic Flute* as verse for music. So much about it is *benissimo trovato* that one might never guess that operatic translation is the world's most frustrating business. Above all the tone of quiet elegance is so simple and right, so simply right. Of the complete arias and other musical numbers, "*Ach ich fühl's*" is to my mind the weakest in translation, which is interesting; but on the other hand a passage that always seems awkward in the German, Pamina's suicide attempt, comes warmly to life and into character. Tamino was no doubt the easiest role to handle, and Papageno the hardest, but Papageno as here imaginatively transformed is the most individual and consistently successful conception of the whole opera. Sarastro, Monostatos, the Three Spirits, and the Armed Men all sing as though the English language were naturally theirs. On the page all the verses may not be immediately striking, perhaps, but sing them to Mozart's music, or listen to them sung, and the integrity of the entire effect commands as much admiration as the ingenuity of solution of many very difficult details.

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